Comparative Studies in Literary Cultures

A.A. MANAVALAN

உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம்

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TAMIL STUDIES

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PREFACE

'Literature is one as art and humanity are one' and the literatures of the world irrespective of languages, geographical boundaries and other humanistic phenomena belong to one tradition. Literature is an exclusive property of human beings, a human prerogative which separates them from the rest of the living world. Contributing significantly to the myriad cultures, customs and traditions of the world, literatures and languages have proven central to human civilization. As such, linguistics of classical literature is a fascinating area of knowledge about the phenomenon of human language and literatures.

A Comparative literature study brings you together the works of eminent critics, scholars, theorists, and literary historians. Their writings range across the rich traditions of language, grammar, lexis and examine their literary relations between two literary and cultural poles. They also explore movements, themes, forms, the history of ideas, relations between authors, and the foundations of criticism and theory. Bringing within its purview, the concepts of two different commentaries on single coordinated thematic terminologies of classical Tamil literatures have been studies and an attempt is taken to delineate the creation of understanding new literary cultures liking various intrinsic conceptual frame works of literary works of the past. The classical literature especially sangam literature was to dominate the literary productions up to the sixth century A.D. in forms and for reasons that need exploring as they may point to yet newer directions in both literature and the

conceptualization of the relationship between linguistics and literature.

Literary criticism is the study, evaluation, and interpretation of literature. Modern literary criticism is often informed by literary theory, which is the philosophical discussion of its methods and goals. Though the two activities are closely related, literary critics are not always, and have not always been theorists. There was a time when the interpretation of literary texts and literary theory seemed to be different and almost unrelated. Interpretation was about the actual meaning of a poem, a novel, or a play, while theory seemed alien to what the study of classical literature was really about because its generalizations could never do justice to individual texts. In the last three decades, however, interpretation and theory have moved closer and closer to each other. In fact, for many contemporary critics and theorists interpretation and theory cannot be separated at all. They would argue that we interpret a text we always do so from a theoretical perspective, whether we are aware of it or not, and they would also argue that theory cannot do without interpretation.

International Institute of Tamil Studies (IITS) at Chennai, proud of noteworthy publications through unfailing contributions on the areas of Literature, Linguistics, Culture, History and even of native science. Many scholars have paid their mental exertion to flourish the intended objective of the Institute. Professor. A.A. Manavalan who is one among the scholars consistently taking part in the co endeavor of IITS is, a well known eminent personality of comparative literature and a good performer of translations of classical texts from Tamil to English and vice versa. In continuation of his scholastic specialization the book to be published from our Institution emerges with the title 'Comparative studies in literary cultures' and hope it will create an immense impression among scholars.

The book contains fifteen articles subjected in various periods and they are chronological and proportionately provided space for each period respectively sangam, bhakthi and modern. The book bestowed home to breakthrough the practical scenario of comparative attempt so far found in the literary cultures. The book begins with interrogating whether there are any literary universals. This leads to assume the possibility of identifying the shared features that prevail in the literary world overcoming the cultural barriers. There is unique harmony to Tolkappiyar's grammar through the next article. The third article objectively examines whether the AKAM examines poetry dealing with the concept of love in sangam literature can be claimed to be romantic poetry. And this article also makes known the fact that the literary genres of the East and West are not similar but quite different from each other in subject matter and poetic manner as well.

Three distinguished articles deal with the exposition of the concept of epic hero, heroine and heroism.The epic 'cilappathikaram' is compared with the literatures of East and West. It is quite interesting that Kalaignar's unique role is compared with international parallels like Senghor and Whitmen in another article.

In continuation, European literary tradition is compared with Tamil literary tradition. Here, the European epic 'Aeneid' of Virgil has been compared to the Tamil epic 'kambaramayanam'. Social significance has been subjected to study the Tamil Bhakthi literature and the same is presented in a separate article. An article compares the influence of Ramayana and Mahabharatha through the Tamil versions of the Sanskrit Ithikasas. There are two articles belonging to the modern period. One deals with the theory of Bharathi's poem and other one compares the Bharathidasan's and Wordsworth's treatment of nature. Finally, one separate article has been included in which, a comparative

approach followed in the teaching of English in India is discussed in detail.

The book in the series of books published through our Institution to pursue knowledge of comparative studies concentrates its focus on exploring various literary comparisons. This book is a conscientious effort to familiarize the readers with not just mere literary cultures, but also foster within them an understanding of the development, changes and methods of appreciating the study of the comparative concepts. Comprehensive, extensive and incisive, it is hoped that this book serves well for all who thirst to adopt new lens to trace the classical Tamil works.

It gives me great pleasure to publish this work through our Institute. I hope this work will gain a lot of appreciation from the lovers of creative writing and comparative studies as well.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to our Chairman, **Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Kalaignar** for his kindness and to our **Hon'ble Finance Minister Prof. K. Anbazhagan** for his tireless efforts to enhance the impetus of the Institute.

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Director

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(1) THE LITERARY UNIVERSALS?

It seems possible to identify some essential features that are shared by almost all literatures of the world in spite of their being culture-specific. An attempt is made in this paper to see whether such essential features be codified under a convenient literary term namely "Literary Universals." By "Literary Universals" we would like to mean those literary features which are not only shared by most of the literatures but which also govern the composition and comprehension of almost all literatures of our human society.

This hypothesis is proposed on the analogy of *Language Universals* recently being talked about among the linguists thanks largely to the works of Noam Chomsky and others. Those who have accepted the Universal hypothesis in regard to natural languages have broadly classified such linguistic features into three kinds; (a) organizational universals (b) formal universals and (c) substantive universals. Statements like,

1. All languages have three kinds of components; a semantic component, a syntactic component and a phonological component.

2. All languages have deep and surface structures, etc.,

are discussed under *organizational universals* as they give us an insight as to how the grammars of all languages are organized.

Formal Universals are those which specify the form of rules or the general conditions on such rules. Statements like the following are being discussed under this category:

1. A .P. S. Rule rewrites a sympol into a string.

2. No item which cannot be uniquely recovered can be deleted, etc.

All languages have nouns and verbs, and these would come under the category of *substantive universals.* With regard to phonological substantive the following are proposed;

1. All languages have vowels and consonants.

2. All languages have oral vowels, etc.

Like a language, a literary work also has got several components. Literature as a work of art may broadly be studied in terms of (a) the poetic personality of the author, (b) the theme and the content (c) the genre and (d) the literary techniques by which the author encodes his message and by which the' reader decodes the same. Though it may be difficult at this stage to specify all the literary universals with categorical accuracy to attract scholarly approbation at once, the following may be proposed as the probable major features of literary universals.

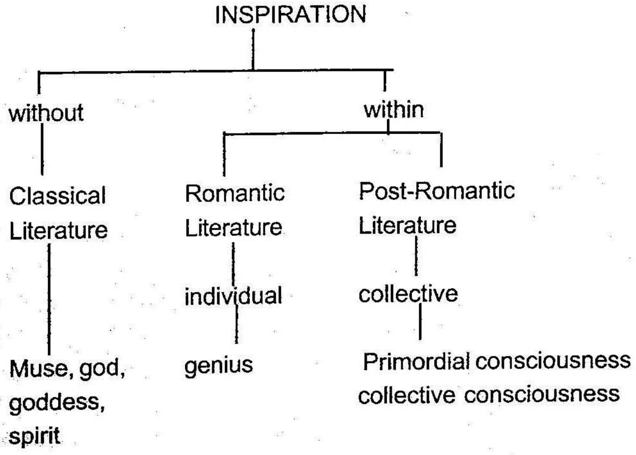
This paper presupposes inevitably of course, on the part of the audience comprehensive knowledge of the nature and function of literature in general, theory of inspiration, themes of literature, theory of literary forms or genres and the techniques of literature such as metre, imagery, imagination (fancy), poetic figures, narrative techniques, etc., besides a general knowledge of what is currently going on in the field of linguistics.

A critical discussion of a work of literature as a work of art will normally include aspects like the compositional aspect of the text, its theme, the genre to which the work belongs and the literary technique which the author has employed in his work. Eventhough there are several other minor aspects within each of the major ones, this paper chooses to deal only with the major ones to see whether such a concept of universals in respect of literature is serviceable as in the case of linguistics. Inspirational universals, Thematic universals, Generic universals and universals of techniques are the major ones proposed here as the probable aspects of the hypothesis.

Inspirational Universals

Almost all literatures have evidences to the fact that inspiration has played an "essential" role in their composition. Inspiration is taken here to mean an uncommon or extraordinary power of the mind of the poet or the author, achieved through diverse means, that enables him to have a vision or a perception or a conception of what he has to represent. In such an inclusive sense it includes the function of imagination also as far as the perceptional aspects are concerned. On the basis of the data available

on record in terms of practice and theory, we can classify Inspiration as from *within and without*. The Classical and Medieval literatures in the West, from Homer to Milton in the epic genre for instance, have evidences to show that they relied upon external assistance for their vision. They invoke Muses and goddesses whether pagan or christian. Plato's" Divine madness" attests to the theoretical aspect of inspiration from without. The Romantic literature which heavily relies upon inspiration tends to believe in the inspiration from within. The Romantics believed in the genius of the individual artist as the source of inspiration. Tbe blessed and serene mood in which the artist is laid asleep in body and becomes a living soul to see into the life of things enunciated by the *Tintern Abbey lines* by William Wordsworth is a case in point to see the difference in this regard between the Classical and Romantic positions. The post-Romantic theory and practice of literary composition also show evidences of inspiration from within. But it prefers to link It not with the individual but with the Primordial consciousness of the mythopoeia or to collective unconsciousness (Charles Jung) or to collective ideology (Roman Jakobson).[1] Tbe following diagram may help us to understand the dual aspect of inspiration more clearly.



Apart from the literatures of the West, most of the literatures of the East also show the involvement of inspiration in the composition of literary works. Both Sanskrit and Tamil literatures-the predominant members of

Indian Literature-reveal such inspirational involvement. While the earliest concept of inspiration in Tamil (as expounded in Tolkappiyam on the basis of the earlier literary practice) has been that of inspiration from *within*, the post-Sangam literature in Tamil, and the Sanskrit literature upto the Middle Ages are seen to have relied upon inspiration from *without*. As far as the ancient Chinese literature, is concerned no definite data regarding this feature is available; yet the later Chinese literature of the Middle Ages attests to the theory of inspiration from within. With regard to the Assyro - Babylonian poetry, inspiration from without hag been relied upon. God " Marduk" is invoked, for instance in the Creation epic, Enuma Elis.

The importance of inspiration both as a mode of perception and as an urge that sets a poet or a creative writer to work can be recognized by its absence or by its lesser involvement in relation to the composition of nonliterary texts in any language.

So 'inspiration' may be considered as a literary universal, from the compositional point of view of literature in general.

Thematic Universals

Themes and propositions of literatures centre upon Man. Literary interest in Man may be of two kinds:

1. interest in his external life with emphasis on his aesthetic being;

2. interest in his internal life with emphasis on his psychological and spiritual being.

Themes of love, friendship, justice, war, confrontation of vice with virtue, etc, tend to dwell upon man's external life. Themes of man's interest in and quest for the realization of his self, the Infinite or for immortality - a kind of psychic yearning to identify his self with the Soul, or the Unkown or Beyond- characterize the interest of literatures in man's internal being. Thus interest in Man (species) by Man (the individual artist) for Men (the audience) seems to be a universal feature of most of the literatures. This is why we are able to say that *literature is species specific*. In other words, none but a human being can produce literature and to none but a human being literature could appeal. It is what precisely we mean when we say

that *literature is human*. It is due to such universalness of the lIterary themes that literature sustains the reader's interest in literature even in translation. Hence its candidature for being a literary universal.

Generic Or Formal Universals

All literatures make use of genres or literary forms to represent their themes. Bardic poetry, heroic poetry (epic), tragedy, comedy, pastoral poetry, didactic poetry, lyrics, ode, elegy, satire, folk songs (like ballad, fables, etc.), hymns, narrative fiction like the novel and short story, biography, etc;, are the major literary forms developed and used by most of the literatures of the world. We do not, however, mean that every literature has made use of all these genres. For instance, epic poetry and long narratives are conspicuously absent in the ancient and medieval Chinese literature. Tragedy in the Aristotelian sense or even in the European sense in general is not found used in Tamil literature. So what we attempt to emphasize here is that every literature bas made use of genres evolved in close consonance with the nature and spirit of its own culture.

A genre may be defined in Saussurean terminology as the langue and the particular individual works composed in that form as the parole of that form of literature in a literature. In other words, the concept and convention of an *elegy* in terms of compositional and thematic aspects constitute the *langue* while Milton's *Lycidas* or Arnold's Thyrsis becomes the parole of that literary form. Again while the concept and convention of a Kōvai form constitute the langue, Manikka Vasakar's Tirukkōvaiyār and Poyya Molippulavar's Tañcaivāṅaṉ Kōvai are the parole of that literary form.

Whereas the conception or evolution of a genre associates it with the inspirational universals, its being the langue of a literature relates it to the generic universals. As an expressional mode, a genre is to a literary work what Plato's Ideas or Forms are to the objects of this world.

"Literary forms, in short". observes Alastair Fowler, "are precisely what distinguish literature from ordinary communication."[2] We prefer to call genre a literary universal not merely because all major literatures have made use of genres, but it has "a necessary heuristic function."[3] Far from being a mere classificatory device, a genre serves primarily to enable

the reader to share types of meaning economically. A genre is thus one of the most important signal systems that communicate a literary work. It is such dual function of a genre (1) distinguishing the literary work from the nonliterary and (2) informing the text with the modal meaning, that characterizes it as an important literary universal.

Universals Of Techniques

If the degree of the depth and breadth of the poetic vision (artistic) is perceptible from the inspirational universals, if the emotional and thematic content of a literary text is governed by the thematic universals, and if the modal meaning of the text is informed by the generic universals, the efficacy of the response of the reader rests squarely on the literary techniques. In other words, the inspirational, the thematic and the generic universals inform the reader of the what of literature, while the universals of technique constitutes the how of literature. As tools of the encoding and decoding processes, techniques of literature form the part and parcel of a literary product.

According to a recent analysis by Henryk Markiewicz,[4] the literariness of a literary text consists in its (a) fictionality, (b) superimposed ordering and (c) heightened figurativeness. Of these three criteria suggested by this eclectic definition of a literary work, 'fictionality' concerns with the **matter** of literature in general. while 'superimposed ordering' and 'heightened figuratiiveness' concern with the **manner** of literature. And the manner of literature consists of several techniques of literature some of which are discussed here as universals of techniques.

Metre

The criterion of 'superimposed ordering' is realized by the use of metre in poetic literature. Almost all literatures, of the world have developed and used their own systems of prosody. Each literature has various metrical forms to express various emotions in consonance with its respective themes, genres and modes. Metre not only distinguishes poetry from prose by its form. but also helps heighten the aesthetic sensibility of the reader through its rhythmic modulation in tune with the emotions portrayed. This is what makes metre achieve literariness in a work of verbal medium. And this is also the reason why 'modern poetry', which does not appear to

have any metre in the technical sense of the term, retains the literariness and is called poetry.

The use of metre In nonliterary texts does not minimise or gainsay the importance of metre to poetry. Though metrical form is not essential to achieve literariness as in the case of prose literature, it is still an inevitable accessory in that it helps the reader as a technique to identify and participate in the feelings of emotions expressed, and thus achieve an "overbalance of pleasure", Hence our consideration of metre as one of the universals of technique.

Imagery

The criterion of "heightened figurativeness" in a literary work is fulfilled by the use of various images and figures. Figures like simile. metaphor. oxymoron, alliteration. synecdoche etc., and modes like allegory, fable, etc., are found used In most of the literatures of the world as devices or techniques of representation. Some literatures like the Chinese are very frugal in the use of figures like metaphor and simile, and yet they employ several other images and figures.

Images and figures as used in literature relate to the **how** of literature. Alexander Pope has some valid point in this regard when he says,

> What oft was thought, but ne'er
> so well express'd;

in that it is rather the expressional aspect of literature which makes it what it is. This does not mean mere foliage without fruit. Since images and figures perform a kind of representational duty normally denied to the realm of nonliterary works, and since the use of such figures enhance the climate of fictionality in a literary work, they are not just ornamental or superinduced, but they serve as tools of composition and comprehension. Thus symbols, images and figures as representational devices may be considered as literary universals of technique.

Fancy (imagination)

No literary work worth the name can dispense with the service of fancy, an aspect of imagination in Coleridgean sense. As an agent of synthesis fancy is directly responsible for the colouring of "fictionality". Most of the

aspects of sensuous or verbal embellishment in literature such as synaesthesia, transferred epithet, natural similes and metaphors, and several kinds of hyperbolic expressions are governed by a free play of fancy in terms of their perception and composition. This fancy, though qualitatively and functionally different from imagination proper whose domain transcends the senses, is still serviceable as a technique in giving a literary work a distinguishing colouring of perspective. As such it pertains to all literatures. It may therefore be considered as a literary universal of techniques in virtue of its function in all literatures both as a device of perception and expression as well.

This paper is an attempt at identifying and eclectically codifying the essential features of all litertures under the caption "Literary Universals". As such it does not make any claims to originality in terms of finding out any new theories regarding the points discussed here such as inspiration, themes, genres or techniques. The existing theories of these literary aspects are in fact the basic data for the study of this paper.

Then what does this paper aim to prove? It does not aim to prove anything. It rather requests the scholarly reader, well-informed in the matters concerned to see whether such a concept of "Literary Universals" is serviceable as a term to refer to the ultimate or ontological aspects of literatures as in the case of the term "Language Universals" which has become more or less an accepted hypothesis found useful in predicting a number of rules and categories that are common to all languages.

Literature is culture-bound. Aspects of a culture that nourish and are in turn cherished by a literature are apparently different from those of another culture. Discussions of several literatures together using a systematic methodology of Comparative Literature may yield fruitful insights into the cultural and literary commonness that lies at the bottom of all literatures beyond the peripheral differences. Does it not sound then that such a concept of literary universals may be useful for the field of Comparative Literature in that it helps us to identify the potential areas where much of cross cultural literary research can flourish and enable us, as a result, to have an idea of the ultimate nature and concept of Literature of Man?

A question may be raised here: Is it not possible to identify *such* areas, do *such* research and to have *such* an idea of Literature of Man, by using the existing phrases like, "Universal features of literature" or "Universal Characteristics of literature", rather than by fashioning a new one?

It is, of course.

But these are phrases, explanatory in themselves, not terms nor concepts. "Literary Universals" is not a new phrase; it is tentatively proposed here as a concept and a term to be used in literary discussions. And again, the members of this group have not so far been brought together for the specific purpose of arriving at such a terminology. Hence this attempt.

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(2) TOLKĀPPIYAR ON POETIC GENIUS

Vinaiyin Nīṅki Viḷaṅkiya Aṟivin

Munaivan Kaṇṭatu Mutanū lākum

(Tol. Porul. 640)[1]

This nūṟpa in the third book of Tolkāppiyam is cardinal from the viewpoint of Poetic Composition. It however, defies clear elucidation acceptable to all schools of Tamil scholarship. The difficulty experienced in such elucidation is in relation to the terms and phrases constituting the nurpa. They may be analysed as below:

Munaivan : Does it refer to God, the Almighty or to a person of great eminence?

Mutal nūl : Does it refer to an original work or the best one? That is to inquire also whether it should be of antiquity or of even later times,

Nūl : Does it mean specifically a systematic treatise like grammar, etc" or poetry, or both?

Vinaiyin Ninki (Viḷaṅkiya Aṟivin Munaivan Kaṇṭatu)

Does it indicate that the poet or the composer should be free from the claims and clutches of the fruits of his deeds in his lives, past and present? Or does it mean his ability to escape from his senses and achieve concentration to a greater degree? In either case, is it a pre-condition that he should be like that throughout his life or only during the time of composition?

Aṟivu : is it knowledge, or wisdom? Is it self acquired or inspired i.e., conscious or unconscious?

Kaṇṭatu : Simply composed or composed through vision?

Before attempting analytical answers to these queries, let us have the full context in which the nūṟpā is placed.

One can say from its context that it defines the term mutal nūl which may be translated for want of a better term as Original Composition/work.

Strangely enough this nūṟpā does not define the work objectively, but describes the same by defining the author eligible to compose such work. But the following stanzas which deal with vaḻinūl are not at all concerned with the personality of the poet. They only describe the salient features of vaḻinūl and prescribe methods to be adopted by vaḻinūl in adapting a ṃutal nūl. The remaining nūṟpās till the end of the chapter, Marapiyal deal with things like the structure of a nūṟpā and a work, types of commentary, defects to be avoided by the poet of vaḻinūl, etc. Thus there is no mention whatsoever of the qualities of the poet in any of the succeeding nūṟpās. He describes on the other hand modes of adaptation and the like which are purely related to techniques of versification. The chapter of which this portion of about 18 nūṟpās forms part deals with usage of words. In other words this chapter is concerned with a part of the medium of Poetic imitation namely nominal terms and their significance in keeping up the tradition. This article essays to show how best this nūṟpā under study can be interpreted as Tolkāppiyar's view of Poetic Genius.

Muṉaivaṉ and Mutalvaṉ

Of the three early commentators who have explained this nūṟpā, Nakkirar, a poet different from his name sake of ihe Caṅkam Period [1a] is considered to be the earliest. He takes this term muṉaivaṉ to mean God when he quotes this marapiyal nūṟpā in his prefatory explanation to Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ.[2]

Though second in the chronology of the history of commmentaries to Tamil works, Iḷampūraṇar is the first scholar to write conmentary to all the three books of Tolkāppiyam. His is the first torch to the olherwise darksome treasure of Tolkāppiyam. It is unfortunate that he does not provide commentary to this nūrpa under discussion. He says that it is too evident to need commentary.[3] We find however from his commentary to the next nūṟpā (641) that he has glossed the term muṉaivaṉ to mean mutalvaṉ, which does not explicitly mean God.

In the course of his commentary to the 639th nūṟpā of Poruḷatikāram, Iḷampūraṇar states that works may be classified into three kinds namely Original Composition/work, Adaptive work and Allied wɔrk. He further adds:

'எதிர் நூல் என்பதும் ஒன்றுண்டு. அதுவும் ஒரு முனைவனாற் செய்யப்படின் முதனூலாம்; பிறர் செய்யின் வழங்காது'[4]

(Refutatory work is another kind of composition which may also be called mutalnūl, if it is composed by a munaivan; otherwise it will not live.)

Godhead is not. 'countable' in Tamil tradition and hence is not preceded by numeral adjectives like a, one, two, etc. And even where the term Kaṭavuḷ is used as a countable, it means sages.[5]

More over Iḷampūranar takes the term Aiyar (ஐயர்) (143rd nūṟpā Poruḷatikāram) to mean munaivar (முனைவர்). The same term in the next nūṟpā (144, line 29) is glossed as munaivar (முனிவர்). We gather therefore that Iḷampūranar employs these terms viz., munaivan (முனைவன்), mutalvan (முதல்வன்), munivan (முனிவன்) and Aiyan (ஐயன்) as synonyms. None of these words is taken by him to mean God. He means only sages who were considered in those days great philosophers and savants of Learning. The term Learning included almost all branches of human learning whether physical or mental.

The issue is further complicated by one more such enigmatic nūṟpā in the same chapter which reads as follows:

Citaivila enpa mutalvan Kaṉṉē. (Tol. Porul. 652)

(It means that the original composition by a mutalvan shall not have any defects.)

This nūṟpā does not, however, find a place in the only extant entire text of Tolkāppiyam with Iḷampuraṇar's commmentary written in palmyra leaves.[6] All other available paper copies of this commentary are taken only from this palmyra script.[7]

There are two printed editions of Iḷampūraṇar's commenntary to the whole of Tolkāppiyam; One is by V. O. Chidambaram Pillai who has based his edition on this Palmyra script.[8] The other is by the Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society (1953) which is reticent as to the edition or script on which it based its edition. But curiously enough V.o.C. edition has incorporated this nūṟpā. (652) into Iḷampūrañar's text. But the editor informs in a footnote[9] that the commentary for the two nūṟpā's 651 and 653 is so corrupt that interpretation is almost difficult. The nūṟpā of

doubtful entry is not provided with any commentary. Besides, this nūṟpā is not followed by the note of purport. This is in contrast to the usual method of commentators who more often than not, appended every nūṟpā with a short note of purport before commenting on it. Such practice is followed in the case of commentaries to poems of Caṅkam anthologies also, where colophons precede the commmentary. These two points that this nūṟpā(652) is not found in the palmyra script and that it is not provided with a note of purport attest our conclusion that Iḷampūraṇar did not meet it in his text of Tolkāpppiyam.

The term mutalvaṉ occurs only twice in the whole of the extant text of Tolkāppiyam. It occurs first in the 137th nūṟpā of Poruḷatikāram.[10] In this context, the term means one who is responsible for or who is the root cause for such actions, consequently means the 'Lover'. The second occurrence is in the nūṟpā of dubious entry just discussed (652). Here the point of pursuit is that mutalvaṉ is 'not used to mean God as far as the extant text of Tolkāppiyam is concerned.

Next to Iḷampūraṇar, Pērāciriyar has written commentary to Marapiyal, the last chapter of Poruḷatikāram. 'Pērāciriyar's opinions regarding the concepts of mutal nūl and vaḻinūl are expressed under the relevant nūṟpās also besides the cardinal one under discussion. According to Pērāciriyar, muṉaivaṉ means God which he expresses by the term muṉṉōṉ.[11] which in turn may be glossed as the First Being. This, he more specifically explains when he refers to the work' Kaḷaviyal ' or Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ as one composed by Perumāṉaṭikaḷ, meaning Lord Siva,[12] He is also of the opinion that great sages could also compose the original works.

There is an interesting point in his commentary in this connexion when he adds that as far as the Tamil language is concerned it was the renowned Sage Akattiyaṉ, not God, who composed the original work.[13] In Pērāciriyar's opinion an Original work may, therefore, be composed either by God or by a great Sage blessed by him. That is to say, he takes the term muṉaivaṉ to mean either God or Sage.

Of the several attempts in this century to explain this crucial nūṟpā three are worth mentioning. One is Nāvalar Na. mu Vēnkāṭacāmy Nāṭṭār who discusses this point in his essay on Akattiyar, serialised in Centmiḻc

Celvi. According to him munaivan may be taken to mean either God or great Personalities blessed by him.[14]

The second is by Dr. P.S.S. Sastri who translates this term as ' a sage of spotless knowledge.'[15] The recent enquiry is by Dr. S. Ilakkuvanar who has dwelt on it in his doctoral thesis on Tolkāppiyam. He considers the nurpas from 648 to 665 of Poruḷatikāram as interpolations.[16] Tamil classical tradition, classical vocabulary and the inter-cum-intra-structure of Tolkāpppiyam are, in his opinion, pointers to such interpolations. But, however, he has translated these nurpas also in the course of his work. With regard to the nūṟpā under study, he means by the term munaivan, 'One who is pre-eminent '.[17] Dr. P.S.S. Sastri and Dr. S. Ilakkuvanar have thus clearly shown that this term refers only to a human being of exceptional eminence.

Leaving the commentators aside, if we look at the text itself, the term munaivan does not recur in Tolkāppiyam but is found in cognate forms as munaivu (II, 386) and munaiñar (III. 60). They mean aversion or satiety, and soldiers respectively. Apart from Tolkāppiyam it has its solitary appearance with plural marker as munaivar in Paripāṭal (1-33) where it means sages.

Tamil Lexicon[18] lists the following meanings for the term in the order:

(1) God, the First Being (Tol. 649).

(2) Saint, Sage (Cīvakacintāmaṇi, 707).

(3) Chief (Tirukkōvaiyār, 329)

(4) The Buddha (Piṅkalam)

(5) Arhal; Arukan (Cintiāmaṅi, 1943)

It does not surprisingly enough, record the occurrence of the term in Paripāṭal cited above but, cites Civakacintāmaṅi as registering the meaning of the term munaivan as sage.

According to the Pre-pallavan Tamil Index (Tol. Porul, 649-2) means, 'the wise person who is freed from the shackles of Karma', and munaiñar. 'the chief of an army division '.[19]

Though Poruḷatikāram has got many occasions for the use of a term meaning God, it nowhere else makes use of the term 'Muṉaivaṉ' in that sense.

A careful and disinterested study of these interpretations' ancient and modern, drives home some important points. Feats of extraordinary merits whether physical or mental were authro-pologically speaking, accounted for as super-human and as such the heroes were worshipped as demi-Gods by the contempoorariess. And through the alchemy of the passage of misty centuries they gained Godhead. This can be attested by an overall glance through the pre-epic pieces of art, architecture and literature; and through the epic characters of almost all the races that have histories both recorded and mythical. Tile famous 'Druids' of the Celts and the 'Naṭukal' of the ancient Tamils are fine pieces of examples in the West and tile East. Greece and Egypt present 'huge' examples of such heroic worship.

Apart from the fact that these heroes partook of celestial genesis, they were usually sages. Sages in those days did not neecessarily mean bachelors, but only erudite scholars, experts in the fields of lheir choice. That their perferment allowed them a long tether to subserve everything else to their field of inquiry is the point of our present interest. In short, they were afforded perfect disentanglement from mundane pursuits and thus they could attain utmost concentration to the extent of sensuous dissengagement. It is this capacity of theirs that earned for them not only success and fame but divine reverence in which the contemmporary and the posterity had had held them. Time in its labyrinnthine and shrouded journey has removed the thin layer of differnce with the result that the sages of First order like 'Akattiyaṉ, Vyāsaṉ, etc., became deified and christened as Katavuḷmāmuṉi, Vyāsa bhagavāṉ etc. Siddhartha the Prince who was a historical personage, became a sage. After enlightenment he was called Buddha Bhagavan. Considered in the historical and 'teleoological' perspectives, all these speculatory views tend to converge at a point where divine involvement does not seem to manifest physically as far as such artistic creations are concerned.

Technique of Poetry

Poetic composition involves two types of operation: the unconscious and the conscious. Poetry, the result of such operations includes likewise two forms: the soul and the body; in other words thought and dress. The soul of poetry is to be directed by the unconscious, while the body of poetry is to be dressed by the conscious part of the mind. And this is called art of versification or technique of verse which means in the words of T. S. Eliot, ' Excellent words in excellent arrangement and excellent metre.' [20]

This art is conscious and the poet has to acquire this through practice and practice alone. Neither intuition nor the unconscious part of the mind can teach this to a poet at one stroke. Perhaps that is what T. S. Eliot may mean when he says, 'Of course this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal, in the writing of Poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate.'[21] This may be understood by the fact that Wordsworth who relied more than anyone else on 'the blessed mood' had been tinkering with his poems for many years (cp. Parallel Texts of Prelude 1805-1850). Keats in the figure of Apollo[22] beseeches Mnemosyne to bless him with some 'bright elixir' to enable him- to understand the Universe and she complies with his request and transmits 'Knowledge'. But even such blessed poet had been revising his lines to make them more and more poetical. Keats was a conscious artist.

Moreover, Tolkāppiyar says that poetic tradition which includes the medium of imitation also (i.e., words, usage, figures, metres, etc.) should not be violated while composing a work, whether it is a mutal nūl or vaḻinūl[23] This means learning the art of versification and handling it to the satisfaction of the tradition which is (i.e., learning and handling) quite evidently human and conscious.

Almost all the modern linguists from Bloomfield to Chomsky[24] have expressed the view that Language was not created by God and that it is made up of systems and structures which the human mind has to learn through drills or exercises. The technique of poetic composition, which means the best use of the best words in a language is, therefore, accomplished by stages only through human efforts. It is this side of

poetic composition that suggests to us that poetic composition as such cannot be ascribed to Godhead which is intangible, and thus incompatible with the human effort of learning and using language as poetic medium. It appears thus improbable that works of literary art could be ascribed to Divine authorship.

Such denial of divine authorship does not amount to that of Godhead itself. The present enquiry is not concerned with the concept of God nor with the existence of such Being. It is solely concerned with the issue of God being the author of a poetic composition.

Mutal Nūl

The next term which requires our attention is mutal nūl. Nakkīrar does not deal with this term elaborately in his commentary to Kaḷaviyal. He makes use of this term in connection with Kaḷaviyal with the explanation that since it was composed by Iṟaiyaṉār, the God, it should be considered an original work and not a vaḻi nūl i.e., an adaptive work.[25] Nakkīrar's explanation does not view the work objectively, but takes the label 'mutal nūl' to simply mean a work by God.

From the fact that Nakkīrar relates the traditional narration as to the inception and history of the Caṅkams with the particulars of the works, authors and the duration of each Caṅkam, we are led to understand that he does not subscribe to the view that mutal nūl should be the first in Time. Nor does he seem to accept the view that mutal nūl should be original, because from his references to Tolkkāppiyam, he seems to know that kaḷaviyal' is not the first to deal with the subject. Moreover he is eloquent of this view when he says that 'Kaḷaviyal' is an abridgement of all the related works prevalent in his time.[26] It follows therefore that to Nakkirar, mutal nūl meant a work by God. Ancientness and originality of treatment do not in his opinion condition the use of the term to a work.

As we have seen before Iḷampūraṇar does not seem to favour the view of divine authorship. In his opinion it need not be original from the point of view of the subject matter alone. It can be original from the viewpoint of treatment also. That is, a work opposing the view of an existing original work, but commposed by a muṉaivaṉ can also be termed mutal nūl. Such

composition is, in his opinion, called **etir nūl** which may be translated as Refutatory work[27] As far as Iḷampūraṇar is concerned the chief characteristic of a mutal nūl is that it should be written by a Sage, which he takes to mean a Personality with erudite scholarship and profound wisdom and this is evident when he glosses the term Aiyar as Muṉaivar under the nūṟpā 143 and as Muṉivar under the nūṟpā 144, line 29 above referred to. These are the only two places where this term Aiyar occurs in Tolkāppiyam. According to Iḷampūraṇar, mutal nūl is, therefore, (1) a work of original composition, originality being either in the subject matter or in the treatment; (2) a work composed by a great sage; and (3) a work which need not be ancient; it may be of even later composition.

In Pērāciriyar's opinion mutal nūl may be composed by God or by a great sage. This is from the point of view of authorship. That is why he considers Akattiyaṉ's as a mutal nūl. And he adds that Kaḷaviyal composed by Perumānaṭikaḷ, though later in time is also a mutal nūl.[28] From the chronological point of view a mutal nūl may be, in his opinion, the earliest or later work. Ancientness of composition is not a point of consideration with him; nei ther the originality of subject matter nor that of treatment has been of any consequence; authorship alone decides the issue for him.

Pērāciriyar takes these terms mutal nūl and vaḻinūl as relative. He explains that as vaḻinūl is one adapted from a mutal nūl, and adaptive work itself can be termed mutal nūl when a third composition is adapted from it. That is to say the fact of being adapted by or adapted from conditions the terminology.[29] But he hastens to add that if it is a work by God, it can never become an adaptive work; it is always mutal nūl and nothing else.[30] That is why he considers Kaḷaviyal an original composition, though he seems to know perfectly well that with regard to the subject matter it follows Tolkāppiyam.

Of the three modern enquiries[30a] referred to above, Na. Mu. Venkaṭacāmy Nāṭṭār thinks that it may be composed (a) earlier or later, (b) either by God or one blessed by Him, (c) but should not adapt or follow any other work.[31] He lays emphasis on one point that it should be original in all respects.

Dr. P. S. S. Sastri's is only a translation of the text. But he does not translate this term, only transliterates it. In his opinion it should be 'Composed by a sage of spotless knowledge.'[32]

Dr. S. Ilakkuvaṉār makes no mention of its being ancient or modern. According to him it should be originally composed by one who is pre-eminent.[33]

Of the foregoing interpretations those of Iḷampuraṇar, of Dr. P. S. S. Sastri and of Dr. S. Ilakkuvaṉār seem to be more appropriate. It would not be far from Tolkāppiyar's view of mulal nūl if we sum up that mutal nūl is an original composition by a person of profound wisdom and wider experience irrespective of its being ancient or not, and that originality may be in relation either to subject matter or to treatment.

N ūl

The nūṟpā under study is deemed as the definition for mutal nūl, one of the two kinds of works classified in the previous nūṟpā which reads as:

Marapunilai tiriyā māṭciya vāki
Uraipaṭu nūltām iruvakai nilaiya
Mutalum vaḻiyumeṉa nutaliya neṟiyiṉa.

(Tol. Porul, 639)

(This may be paraphrased as follows: Works which should not deviate from the traditional viewpoint of poetic idiom may be classified into two kinds as mutal nūl and vaḻinūl).

There is enough room here for ambivalence. Naturally one would like to raise a question whether Tolkāppiyar meant by the term nūl a treatise like grammar, etc., or poetry, or both. This crux has to be explained before taking up the next point in this issue.

The term Nūl occurs in about twelve places in Tolkāppiyam text and once as part of the chapter heading Nūṉmarapu. Of these in one place alleged to be an interpolation it means the sacred thread worn across the shoulders by the Brahmins. In 5 places it means specifically grammatical treatise. In Nūṉmarapu it is used in the sense of phonemes, in the remaining six in the sense ot poetry in general.

No.of occurrences[33a]	Meaning in which the term employed
1 (Nūṉmarapu)	Phoneme
4+ 1 (Tol. Col. 463, Poruḷ 457,515,644,656)	Treatise, preferably grammar
6 (Tol. Poruḷ 384, 467, 468, 639, 640, 650)	Poetry in general
1 (Tol. Poruḷ 615)	Sacred thread

As far as the poems of Caṅkam anthologies are concerned the term occurs in 43 places. The break-up of its varied uses is as follows:

Caṅkam Works

No. of occurrences	Meaning in which the term employed
25+3	Cotton yarn[34]
3 (Perum. 236, Nar. 189:8, Aka. 224:8)	Cobweb
6+3	Specific treatise such as works on statecraft, ethics, horsemanship and musicology, etc.[35]
3 (Muruku. 261, Aka. 181: 16, Puṟa. 166:4)	Works without specification meaning both literature and treatise.

It may be seen from the above tables that the term Nūl was not solely employed to mean grammatical treatise alone. It is used to denote both the types of compositions, i.e., literature and treatise as well in Caṅkam works.

Ceyyuḷ

The term Ceyyuḷ is also of some significance with regard to the meaning in which it is used. No general term seems to have denoted literature. It appears however from a meaning frequency-analysis that the term Ceyyuḷ might have been used to mean literature in general. The term occurs in 32 contexts in the text and in one as part of a chapter

heading viz., Ceyyuḷiyal. The following is a meaning frequency-analysis of this term.

Tolkāppiyam

No. of occurrences	Meaning in which the term employed
30	Poetry in contrast to prose, meaning literature.[36]
1-1-1 (Tol. Porul. 310, Ceyyuḷiyal)	Prosody
1 (Tol. Porul. 466)	broader term referring to Pāṭṭu, Urai, Nūl, Vāymoḻi, Pici, Aṅkatam and mutucol

Caṅkam Works

Patiṟṟuppattu 2 (Patikam 5:23, 6: 12)	Poems (Poetry)
Puṟam 2. (53:11, 202:12)	Poetry

It follows then from this analysis[36a] that the term Ceyyuḷ was used to denote Poetic composition of any sort in Tolkāppiyam as well as in the works of the Caṅkam period.

Nūṟpā 466 of Poruḷatikāram says in clear terms that Ceyyuḷ without restriction on the number of lines are of six kinds and they are: urai, nūl, Vāymoḻi. pici, aṅkatam and mutucol. That is to say the term Ceyyuḷ comprises all these kinds which can be of any length.

According to 636th nūṟpā of Poruḷatikāram, Ceyyuḷ should not brook deviation from the traditional view of the usage of words, lest the golden chain of communication will be broken.

Marapunilai tirilal ceyyuṭ killai
Marapuvaḻip paṭṭa colli ṉāṉa 636

Marapunilai tiriyā mātciya vāki
Uraipaṭu nūltām iruvakai nilaiya
Mutalum vaḻiyumeṉa nutaliya neṟiyiṉa 639

Viṉaiyiṉ nīnki viḷaṅkiya aṟiviṉ
Muṉaivaṉ kaṇṭatu mutalnūl ākum 640

A close and concatenated scrutiny of these nūṟpās rewards us with the information that the terms Ceyyuḷ and nūl are used more or less as synonyms.

Dr. P. S. S. Sastri translates the terms nūl (நூல்) and ceyyuḷ (செய்யுள்) in the following ways:[37]

Nul-nūl (385) (numbering of the nūṟpās according to his edition)

-literature	(458)
-nūl	(468)
-nūl	(469)
-works	(642)
-work	(643)
-nūl	(647)
-book, work	(653)
-work	(659)

Except when he transliterates, Dr. Sastri takes it to mean either literature or Poetical works in general.

Ceyyuḷ

-poetry	(467)
-literature	(546)
-verse	(639)

(Here the critically important contexts alone are cited.)

'But the word nūl,' observes Dr. S. Ilakkavaṉār, 'is used by Tolkāppiyar himself to denote any treatise including grammar and literature.'[38] And hence we are led to conclude that the definition of mutal nūl in nūṟpā 640, envisages both the types of works viz., treatise and poetry.

The last part of the discussion is about the phrase Viṉaiyiṉ Nīṅki Viḷaṅkiya Aṟivu (வினையின் நீங்கி விளங்கிய அறிவு)' This phrase describes the nature of the poet's personality.

Nakkirar and Iḷampūraṇar do not comment upon this phrase, tbe former having no occasion except quoting and the latter treating it as self-evident. Pērāciriyar's explanation may be paraphrased as follows: Viṉaiyiṉ Nīṅki-emancipated from the clutches of the reactions of one's actions, good and bad. Viḷaṅ-kiya aṟivu-comprehensive sensibility or wisdom.[39] His interpretation is based on the theory of Karma. The poet by which he means here God or a sage, should be able to ward off the effects of his actions in order that he shall get a clear and commplete vision of the object under contemplation. Traditional scholarship followed his suit.

Of lhe two modern translators of Tolkappiyam P.S.S. Sastri[40] paraphrases it thus: Viṉaiyiṉ Nīṅki -' being free from the effed of Karma.' Aṟivu--' spotless knowledge.' Dr. S. Iḷaṅkkuvaṉār,[41] translates thus: Viṉaiyiṉ nīṅki-'free from the influence of worldly activities', aṟivu-'knowledge'.

What prompted the traditional scholarship to hold such theistic notion of the attributes discussed here?

Enlightenment or profound wisdom is possible only by becoming free from the claims and clutches of the reactions issuing from one's actions in Life. These reactions consequent to and attending on one's desilies shall clog one's power of thinking and colour one's ideas with the result that the comprehension of such persons will be incomplete, and hence less universal in its outlook. But it is almost impossible for human beings physiically alive, to gain such freedom.

Muṉaivaṉ is glossed as God in Jainism which was dominant from the post- Caṅkam period to that of early (anonymous) commentators, upto the 10th c.A.D. Though Alwārs and Nāyaṉmārs were powerful and popular towards the end of this otherwise Jainist era literary works including ethics, like Nālaṭiyar, etc. epics like Peruṅkatai, Cīvakacintāmaṇi etc., and lexical compilations like Pinkalam etc., were composed mostly by Jain scholars during this period. Ālwārs and Nāyaṉmārs were concerned very much in combating the foreign religions like this and with composing devotional

songs. It is not, therefore,improbabl'e to surmise that though the populace was weaned away from this religious influence, literary scholarship was still within their influence which is corroborated by the fact that most of the good works were written by scholars of that belief and that the first extant clear commentary to Tolkāppiyam. is by a Jain monk Iḷampūraṇar. Though Saivism also partakes of this notion of Karma theory, as far as literature was concerned Jainism had already gained much ground in perpetuating this belief among the scholars of note. This is why the phrase has been extended an interpretation of Karmic release.

The Western View

But the western literary criticism from Plato onwards has been rife with such notions that some way or other superhuman element affected the literary composition. Plato disallowed poets into his Republic on the ground that poetry sung by poets caught in 'madness' would not be beneficial to the society and state. Aristotle though refuted such ouster of poets by his master had never denied such celestial involvement in the composition. But they termed such involvement as Inspiration. This line of conception continues in the Occident . Literary critics whether Classicists or Romanticists believed in such involvement. Modern psychologists though do not accept this as such recognise in the creative process of Art an unanalysable element influencing the creation which they explain of course, in their own jargon. It seems clear, therefore, that there is something superhuman influence in the process of literary composition which has been explained through the ages in an idiom relishable to the respective milieu.

In the Orient also such speculations has been rife through the ages, but with some difference i.e., dogmas rather than definitions had been ruling such speculations. Godhead and saintlihood were considered the only eligible personalities in the field. Passage of time and plurality of works caused modifications in this opinion with the result that Blessings of God or those of other such personalities were considered essential for any such human endeavour. This can be understood by the gradual increase of invocatory songs or portions prefixed to any work of verbal art. This dogma of divine assistance had so completely pervaded the human activities, literary and nonliterary, in the East and particularly in

India, that hardly would anyone start scribbling whatsoever without prefixing some deity's name or at least a sign like உ, ஸ்ரீ, etc. This practice was in vogue till the dawn of this century and afterwards relegated to the background or condemned as superstitious by the rationalists. One can still meet vestiges of such practice in some quarters.

What do these critical beliefs and dogmas of the East and West signify? They have some import. Human minds whether ancient or modern, religious or irreligious, theistic or atheistic, traditional or scientific; have subscribed to the view that something else other than' conscious human mind 'has some role to play in the composition of works of Art.

For clear elucidation of the nūrpā some important points of departure and deviation in the western literary crticism may be taken for discussion.

Romanticism and Classicism are the two main currents constituting the flow of literary criticism in the west. As far as the English part is concerned William Wordsworth may be connsidered as the chief exponent of the English Romanticism. His opinions and ideas of the process of poetic composition are found expressed in his 'Tintern Abbey Lines' and in his 'Preface to the Lyrical Ballads'. According to Wordsworth successful composition takes place in a SERENE AND BLESSED MOOD, in which corporeal suspension is complete and the poet is able to 'see into the life of things.'[42] This mood made possible in the association of Nature is variously termed as 'Mystic release', Inspiration, etc. If the film of mysticism is removed, one gathers from this view that physical suspension of one's senses facilitates deeper contemplation wherein one's vision is least coloured or least conditioned by one's personal traits.

P. B. Shelley, the reformer of the younger Trio and equally a romantic theorist of poetry asserts: 'Poetry is indeed something divine .... Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose Poetry." The greatest Poet even cannot say; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind awakens to transitory brightness.'[43] 'Poetry, as has been said, differs in this respect from logic that it is not subject to the control of the active powers of the mind and that its birth and recurrence have no necessary connection with the consciousness or will.[44]

John Keats, who seems to have been more complete in attaining the mood rather than in describing it, characterises this mood by the term, NEGATIVE CAPABILITY.'[45] This he explains as the poetical character having no self of its own, having no identity; 'it has as much delight in conceiving an lago as an Imogen .... It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one, because they both end in speculation.[46] Such a state of mind is impossiible unless the poet achieves psychic release from the fetters of the physical claims.

It is clear from these three great poels of English Romanticism that perfect composition of Poetry requires a kind of mood or a state of mind conducive to creation, which is possible to one (WW) when he is in the consonant association of Nature, to one (PBS) through the interpenetration of a divine nature through his own and to one (KTS) at the sight of a thing of Beauty.

On his own authority T.S. Eliot is an avowed classicist in Literature. He is responsible for a new wave of literary criticism, in England and in America. 'IMPERSONALITY IN ART,' 'OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE' and 'DISSOCIATION OF SENSIBILITY' have been of great import in directing the course of literary criticism from the twenties of this century. His theory of impersonalily in Art has direct bearing on our present inquiry. According to him, the progress of an artist is a continual self sacrifice, a continual extinction of Personality.'[47] He compares the mind of the poet to the shred of platinum, a catalyst. That is a finely perfected medium in which special or very varied feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations .... '[48] 'the more perfect the artist, the more completely separately in him will be lhe man who suffers and the mind which creates.'[49]

With regard to the mood and nature of the process he says, 'It is a concentration- which does not happen consciously or of deliberation.'so In connection with the degree of participation of the poet he says, the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious not of what is dead, but of what is already living.'[51]

William Butler Yeats was, in the opinion of T.S. Eliot, the greatest representative of Modern Poetry. During his long and varied poetic career of fifty years he has experimented with various modes of poetry. His earlier poems are of anthology type with romantic fervour and in his last phase of creation he is a symbolist poet partaking of almost all the traits of modern poetry.

His lines of 'Byzantium,' 'I hail the superhuman, I call it death-in-life and life-in-death' and

Where blood begotten spirits come

And all complexities of fury leave,

Dying into a dance

An agony of trance

An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.

describe a mood, a trance-like state of mind in which artistic creation becomes possible and successful. These lines find echo in those of his Diary of 1930:

'I am always in all I do, driven to a moment which is the realisation of myself as unique and free, or to a moment which is the surrender to God of all that I am.'[52]

We have seen thus the romantic poets and the classicists who are considered to be at poles apart in their modes of art are quite in consonance as far as the genesis and the process of poetic composition is concerned. In fact T.S. Eliot criticises the opinions of Wordsworth in no equivocal terms in 'Talent'. But his own description of the process tells more or less the same story in a different idiom. Both these views accept that deep concentration wherein the personal traits do not creep in and clog the process is essential to an enduring vision. They are not therefore contradictory but only complementary in some respects and corroborative in essence. This is so because, 'classical and romantic-these are the systole and diastole of the human heart in history.'[53]

George Santayana was a poet, a critic and a philosopher. According to him' intuitive essences' constituted the substance of Art. In his opinion

Poetry and Religion are identical in essence and the highest Poetry is not that ot the versifiers, but that of prophets, or of such poets as interpret verbally the visions. 'But,' he says, 'if we drop the limitation to verbal expression, and think of Poetry as that subtle fire and inward light which seems at times to shine through the world ... then poetry is a momentary harmony in the soul amid stagnation of conflict,-a glimpse of the divine and an incitation to a religious life.'[54]

His 'momentary harmony in the soul' is the psychologists' contact of the conscious mind with the unconscious. It is in this harmony' a glimpse of the divine' or ' inward light' is possible for the mind in contemplation. This is the 'serene and blessed mood' of Wordsworth; the' transitory brightness' of Shelley; the initiating point to that of Keats's 'Negative Capability'.

J.P. Sartre, an existential philosopher deals at length with the Psychology of Imagination. He uses the term 'Consciousness' in a different sense. 'State of Consciousness' implies a sort of inertia or passitivity of the mental structures. His statement with regard to our interest is as follows: 'in order to imagine, consciousness must be free from all specific reality and this freedom must be able to define itself by a 'being-in-the-world' which is at once the constitution and the negation of the world, the concrete situation of consciousness in the world must at each moment serve as the singular motivation for the constitution of the unreal. 'The unreal is produced outside the world by a consciousness which stays in the world and it is because he is transcendentally free that man can imagine.'[55] His is thus a noetic explanation of poetic composition.

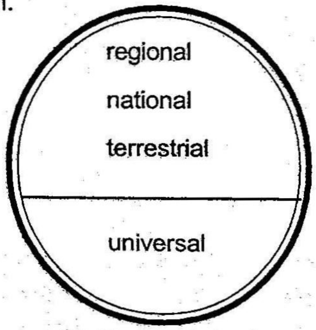
Apart from the views of the poets and philosophers, those of the psychologists also started pouring into the pool of literary criticism in the West towards the end of the 19th c. Ernst Cassirer's 'Critical phenomenology of the mythical conscioussness' and Jung's theory of a 'Universal Collective Unconsciousness' are the outstanding contributions in this field.

In Cassirer's opinion which is shared by mythopoeic critics like Northrop Frye, poetry originates in the subjectivity of the mythic consciousness ... 'the laws of which are independent of empirical truth and discursive logic.'[56]

According to the psychologist C.G. Jung, poetry 'springs from archetypes stored in a Universal Collective unconscious mind,'[57] the archetypal patterns of which also 'cannot be fathomed by the conscious intellect'.[58] These two theories imply a concept of poetic autonomy. Both the theories consider poetry as objectification of Primordial consciousness, which means exclusion of the individuality of the medium. These theories do not of course stand unchallenged. For example, Erich Fromm, one of the founders of the neo-Freudian trend in psychoanalysis criticises those psychoanalysts who consider the' unconscious' as something with which an individual is equipped biologically. Fromm thinks that the very 'term the unconscious is actually a mystification ... There is no such thing as the unconscious; there are only experiences of which we are aware, and others of which we are not aware, that is, of which we are unconscious.'[59]

But he explains the social unconscious as areas of represssion which are not individual but common to most members of a society.[60] Erich Fromm does not, however, seem to seriously question the basic assumptions of the psychoanalysis concerning the unconscious, but only sets out to interpret it in a neo-Freudian light. Sol Yurich after Mao is on the other hand highly skeptical about the theory of collective unconscious when he poses the question, "Who collected that consciousness? "[61]

The working of the theory of collective unconsciousness may be roughly explained thus: The unconscious mind represents the racial Mind and Knowledge. Under deep concentration facilitated by various means the conscious mind can have , links' with the unconscious mind which is constituted of many layers. These layers are said to represent various levels of comprehension.



The Unconscious Mind

The surface layer is nearer to the conscious mind. The deeper the contact of the conscious with the unconscious the broader the outlook or vision to be obtained. The depth of contact is directly proportional to the depth of concentration which is in turn, in proportion to the efficacy of the mental climate under which the actual concentration takes place.

The epic poets are in general, said to have had deeper contacts with the unconscious and it is only because of such deeper vision that they are closer to the Human Mind. This is why Iliad, Odyssey and Aeneid on the one hand, the Ramayana and Mahabharata on the other are similar in spirit and in the grasp of the human situations, though there are very many differences in the superinduction of the artistic structure, and other details conditioned by and confined to geographical distributions.

What is Arrived at

From all these notions of the genesis of poetic composition whether those of poets or of philosophers or of psychologists we understand that deep contemplation is essential for such creative work. One has to extricate himself from mundane claims to help himself enter into that mood. The duration of such mood may be conditioned by internal fervour as well as by external environments. How that beautiful poem, Kubla Khan by S.T. Coleridge was spoiled by such interruption is a case in point. Such concentration is what the phrase Viṉaiyiṉ nīṅki seems to signify.

It is quite discernible that such intense concentration is not possible for all human beings alike. The less one is involved in or eroded by worldly affairs, the more intense would be his degree of concentration. The deeper the concentration lhe clearer the vision of the subject of contemplation. It is, therefore, quite understandable that the commentators ascribed compositions to sages who could have been by their vocation and volition able to achieve extraordinary concentration conducive to composition of works of enduring values. The term Cāṉṟōr variously modified as Caṅkac Cāṉṟōr, āṉṟavintaṭaṅkiya Koḷkaic Cāṉṟōr, etc., seems to signify such personalities.[62] Without resorting to the theory of Karma, this phrase can thus be explained to convey the same idea.

Arivu and Kantatu

The terms Arivu and Kantatu are interrelated. Arivu here means wisdom, or knowledge. It is ' unconscious' in Jungian terminology and' conscious' in J. P. Sartre's. Kantatu means composed or created with the help of wisdom acquired through vision.[63]

To Sum up, the nūrpā under discussion may be interpreted as follows:

An Original work is one composed by a poet of profound wisdom and comprehensive vision ensured through utmost contemplation under intense fervour.[64]

References

1 Numbering of the nūrpās is according to the S.I.S.S.W. Publishing Society edition of Ilampūranam (1953), 1856, unless otherwise mentioned.

1a Dr. M. Varadarajanar, Kalaikkalañciyam, Vol, V, p. 484

2 Iraiyanār Akapporul, S.I.S.S.W. Publishing Society, Madras (1953) 1969, p. 3.

3 Tol. Porul, Ilampūranam, S.I.S.S.W.P., Society, (1953), 1956, p. 575. Op.cit., nūrpā 639, p. 574

4 Op. cit, nūrpā 639, p. 574

5 Kaliltokai: 93-7, 29, 35. Cilappatikāram: 14-41, 21-40, 27-98.

6 Tol. Porul. Ilampūranam, V.O.C. edition 1936, p. 484, footnote.

7 Op. cit., editor's note, p. 2, para 2.

8 Op. cit., editor's note, p. 1

9 Op. cit., p. 484, footnote.

10 Ampalum Alarum Kalavu Velippatutaliū Aṅkatan mutalvan Kilava nākum.

11 Tol. Porul. Pēraciriyam, S.I.S.S.W.P. Society (1951), 1969, nūrpā 649, p. 479.

12 Op. cit., p. 480

13 Op. cit., p. 480.

14 Centamilc Celvi, Vol. 1, p. 262 (1923)

15 Tol. Porul Tamil Poetics, Part III, nūṟpā, 643; Published by The Kuppuswamy Sastri Research Institute, Madras-4, 1956.

16 Tholkāppiyam (in English) with critical studies, Kuralneri Publishing House, Madurai-6, 1963, p. 259.

17 Op. cit., p. 259, nūṟpā 649.

18 Vol. VI, p. 331l.

19 Pre Pallavan Tamil Index by N. Subrahmanian, University of Madras, 1966, p. 703.

20 The Sacred Wood (University Paper backs, Methuen, 1969), Preface p. IX

21 The Tradition and the individual Talent, in English Critical Texts ed. Enright and Chickera, p. 300, 11, 290-292.

22 Middleton Murry, Keats and Shakespeare (reprint 1958), p. 92

23 Tol. Porul. 639

24 'Language and Freedom", reprinted in Tri Quarterly, N.W. University, Evanston, Illinois; No. 23/24, 1972, p. 31.

25 Iraiyanār Akapporuḷ, p. 3

26 Op. cit., p. 4

27 Tol. Porul Ilampūraṇam, nūṟpā 639, p. 574

28 Tol. Porul Pērāciriyam, p. 480 and 501.

29 Op. cit., p. 481

அகத்தியம் → பன்னிரு படலம் → பு.வெ. மாலை

முதல் → வழி }

முதல் → வழி

30 Op. cit., p. 479, nūṟpā, 649.

30a Besides, Tamil Lexicon (Vol. VI, p. 3262) records the following description of mutalnūl.

1 Original or Primary work regarded as divine, one of the three kinds of Nūl. Nūlvakaimūṉṟaṉul piṟanūlaippiṉpaṟṟatu iṟaivaṉal iyaṟṟap peṟṟatu. (Tol. Porul. 649)

(நூல் வகை மூன்றனுள் பிற நூலைப் பின்பற்றாது இறைவனால் இயற்றப் பெற்றது - தொல். பொருள். 649).

It may be noticed here that the English and Tamil versions are not strictly identical. The pharse regarded as divine in the English version sounds noncommittal, while the pharse 'இறைவனால் இயற்றப் பெற்றது' is assertive. For such assertion it quotes none other than the Tolkāppiya nūṟpā where the term mutual occurs. By the bye, it may also be noticed that Tolkāppiyam classifies nūl two kinds only (mutal, vali) and not three as is recorded here.

31 Centamiḻc Celvi, Vol, I (1923), p. 262

32 Tol. Porul. Tamil Poetics, Part III, p. 92, nūṟpā, 643

33 Tholkāppiyam (in English) with critical studies, p. 259, nūṟpā 649.

33a These are based on, 'Paḻantamiḻ nūṟcol Aṭaivu', Published by French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry. (Vols. I, II & III, 1967, 1968 & 1970).

34 Poruna 161, Perum 469, Matu 554, kuṟun 51, 104, 173, 253. Pari 8-5, 10-10, 11-79, kali 64-3, 85-14, 96-13, 103-30 (2), 31, 138-8. 140-6. Aka 136-14, 289-11, 315-12, 361-5. Puram 29-2, 159-4, 284-3, 392-15. Patiṟṟu. க.வா 6, 34-3, 39-9.

35 Matu 646, Pari 11-78, Kali 99-3, Aka 114-8, 234-7, 314-8, 400-5, Cirū 230, Perum 487.

36 Tol. Eḻuttu 51, 209, 214, 235, 238, 259, 289, 306, 317, 357, 481, 483, Tol. Col. 18, 39, 51, 109, 195, 196, 211, 397, 463, Tol. Porul 213, 423, 432, 433, 434, 462, 537, 544, 636.

36a Such analysis cannot be, of course, absolute in that our references are confined to the existing texts alone. Should some more works

or such antiquity be unearthed in future, this account may have to be modified accordingly.

37 Tolkāppiyam, Porul-Atikāram-Tamil Poetics - Part III. The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Mylapore, Madras, 1956.

38 Tholkāppiyam (in English) with critical studies, p. 263, footnote.

39 Tol. Porul, Perāciriyam, p. 479, nūṟpā, 649.

40 Tol. Porul - Atikāram - Tamil Poetics, Part III, page 92, nūṟpā, 643.

41 Tholkāppiyam (in English) with critical studies, p. 259, nūṟpā, 649

42 Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbdy, 11, 52-50

43 A Defence of Poetry, in English Critical Texts, 11, 979-1001.

44 Op. cit., 11, 1121-1124.

45 Letter to George and Thomas Keats, 21 December 1817, in English Critical, Texts 257.

46 Letter to Richard Woodhouse, 27 October 1818; Op. cit., p. 258, II. 87-91

47 'Talent', in English critical Texts, p. 296, 11. 145-147.

48 Op. cit., p. 297, 11. 169-171.

49 Op. cit., p. 297, 11. 180-182.

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51 Op. cit., p. 297, 11. 312-316.

52 Explorations, Macmillan, 1962, p. 305.

53 Herbert Grierson, The Background of English Literature (Chatto and Windus 1962), p. 287.

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56 Quoted by Gerald Graff in Poetic Statement and Critical Dogma, (N.W. University Press, Evanston (USA), (1970), p. 66

57 Op. cit., p. 71

58 Op. cit. p. 72

59 Erich Fromm, Beyond the Chains of Illusion (1962), p. 9 - quoted by V.I. Dobrenkov, Neo-Freudians in Search of "Truth", Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, pp. 104-105

60 Beyond the Chains of Illusion, p. 88, quoted by V.I. Dobernkow op. cit., p. 105.

61 Tri Quarterly, No. 23/24, N.W. University, Evanston, Illinois, 1972, p. 509.

62 Op. 'yātta Ceyyel aṭaṅkiya Kolkaik Kākkaipaṭiṉiyār Naccellaiyar'. (Pairṟuppattu, patikam 6, (11-13).

63 Tamil Lexicon, Vol, II, p. 857. Kān def. 4.

64 For such a non-theistic notion of Original composition in relation to this nūrpā, see Dr. K. Meenakshisundaram, Journal of Tamil Studies, I.I.T.S. Madras, No. 1, 1972, p. 72, lines 1-7.

(3) IS AKAM POETRY ROMANTIC? - THE CLASSICALITY OF AKAM POETRY

A Case for Clarification

Akam and Puṟam are the two divisions of the body of Tamil Literature known as the Caṅkam classics. This dual classification is neither compilatory nor arbitrary, but thematic and traditional. Akam poetry is concerned with an idealised form of Love in its various attitudes and phases. Love episodes in epics and in other forms of narrative works, and certain other elements like the description of the five-fold tiṇais are manifest throughout the history of Tamil Literature. This narrowing down in its concept and convention due to the social and literary milieux has resulted in the discontinuity of the tradition reducing its original aim and execution to those of mere love poems.

Owing to the everwidening senses of the terms, Romance and Romanticism, Romantic poetry is being loosely understood to be concerning itself with such human love in the main. Hence the vague association between Akam and Romantic poetries. Moreover, the nomenclature of Romantic poetry as Subjective/ Personal poetry, and the fact that Akam poetry also deals with love between a man and a woman which is of course personal and subjective, have also contributed much to such concept ual confusion.

This short article attempts to bring home the point that these two literary genres of the East and the West are not similar but quite different from each other in subject matter and poetic manner as well.

What is Akam Poetry?

The term Akam means in Tamil in or inner and thus the inner aspect of human experience, while the term Puṟam means outer and thus the outer aspect. The term 'inner aspect' does not mean just any inner experience that a human being is capable of. It refers here only to the emotive experience of love between a man and a woman. There are other aspects of human experience like justice, friendship, psychic release and other such spiritual things which are also really inner, but they are not inlended

here. Akam does not have anything to do with these. Akam poetry has thus restricted relevance and reference only to *an idealised form of love represented in a highly conventionalised poetic idiom.* Again the chief forte of the aspect of Akam love is the sexual union and all the other aspects treated in it whether precede it or attend on it.[1]

Unlike the term Akam poetry which fits into such a neat definition, Romantic poetry does not lend itself to any single definition acceptable to all shades of critical opinion. Some important definitions or explanations may be considered here:

(I) The essence of Romantic poetry is that in catching the fleeting moment of joy it opens the doors to an eternal world.[2]

(2) Romanticism can be defined only in terms of pure psychology. Any other formula alters or limits arbitrarily its very essence.[3]

(3) Among the many semantic accretions of the word Romanticism, two closely related ideas are the most fertile sources of implications: liberty and emotions. Liberty covers individualism and rebellion against rules, authority and tradition; the emotions seem to involve spontaneity, the subconscious ... and other human characteristics that are non-rational such as " life force", intuition, the mystical faculty.[4]

(4) Complex and baffling as Romanticism is to define there can be little doubt that the heart of it was the egotistical sublime-the cult of original, distinctive personality, the impassioned belief in individualism, the use of poetry for self-projection, self-analysis, self -assertion and ultimately sometimes for exhibitionism and self-gratification. The first and foremost article of the Romantic creed was the affirmation of a god like 'I' that makes the poetic world and that in creating poetry creates itself.[5]

(5) The central distinctive feature ofthe Romantic mode is the search for a reconciliation between the inner vision and the outer experience expressed through, a creative power greater than his own because it includes his own' (Frye); or

(6) the synthetic imagination which performs this reconciliation and the vision it produces of a life drawing upon 'a sense of the continuity between man and nature, and the presence of God' (Wellek).[6]

A discriminating study of the best of English Romantic poetry will convince us that none of the definitions or explanations quoted above is complete in itself. Each of them has some salient aspect of Romantic poetry in view, but only some aspect. It is not very difficult to see the reason for such multiplicity of opinions. Besides the fact that Romanticism itself varies in perspectives from Nation to Nation as French Romanticism, German Romanticism, etc., the creed of English Romanticism also varies from poet to poet. The pithy phrases applied to these poets such as: Blake the visionary, Wordsworth the poet of Nature, Coleridge the metaphysician, Keats the lover of Beauty, Scott the romancer, Shelley the reformer, Byron the rebel, etc., bear ample testimony to the multiplicity of phases of Romantic poetry. Hence such a welter of opinions. The chief differences of opinion in this regard can however be said to lie in the attempt to characterise the entire body of English Romantic poetry either -as timeless or temporal. For example, while Lovejoy[7] advocates 'timeless characterisation' by identiifying certain ideas, Poetic, Social and Philosophical, in the poetry of any age or nation, Northrop Frye and Rene Wellek would have it to signify 'a historical centre of gravity which falls somewhere around the 1790 -1830 period.'[8] The possible definitions of Romantic poetry are thus not only various but also varied.

Akam Versus Romantic Poetry

However, it would suffice for the present enquiry to note that the cardinal differences between these two important genres of poetry stem from the fact that whereas Akam poetry is essentially objective/impersonal, Romantic poetry is subjective/personal. Understanding the significance of a piece of Romantic poetry is, therefore, possible only when the social and literary milieux of the Romantic poet are brought to bear on such exposition. This is not so in the case of Akam poetry. Biographical elements of an Akam poet have no bearings on his poetry. A reasonable grasp of the poetic convention of Akam is enough' to understand and enjoy it '.

Akam exclusively deals with heterosexual human love between an ideal pair with the necessary antecedent and attendant phases. Mutual love in their hearts kindled from a providential encounter is an essential and unexceptional prelude to the love depicted in this poetry.[9] Love in

Akam does not exclude consummation and almost all the implications and delicate emotions pertaining thereto are given candid but decent expression.

Treatment of human love in Romantic poetry is only one of the many subjects dealt with. Romantic poetry is concerned with numerous things. To a Romantic poet even" the meanest flower that blows can give/ Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."[10] Choice of Subjects is quite banal to him.

"The Romantics were concerned with the things of the spirit and hoped that through imagination and inspired insight they could both understand and present them in compelling poetry".[11] These poets had a predilection for the unfamiliar alld strange, for the remote in place and time and for an experiience beyond the senses. Romantic poetry is, therefore, replete with such experiences and emotions, usually psychic and hence intangible.

There have been poets like John Keats who have lavished their poetic powers on sensuous representation of their experience, but such sensuous representation is only a medium through which they lead the reader to the beyond. The immediate is made use of for the explanation or exposition of the eternal. For example, Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale was occasional in origin, The poet heard the song of the bird and set out to describe its effect, but crossed soon the temporal and was in a vision, a waking dream:

Thou wast not born for death immortal bird!
    No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
    In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
    Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for horne,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
    The same that oft-times hath

Charm 'd magic casements, openi ng on the foam

Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

The song of the bird which was tangible is shown to be a symbol of timeless song. The very inspiration is fired by an actual case but soon transports the poet to the world of vision, to an experience of the timeless, of "some undefined superior order of things. This dual purpose gives a special character to Romantic poetry."[12]

For a variety of reasons the romantic poets felt forlorn, cut off from the world about them. They felt that they were out of tune with their environs and that in a way 'Time was out of joint' for them. Hence they sought for a reconciliation between the inner vision and the outer experience: This they expressed through the 'synthetic imagination which performs this reconciliation. It is precisely because of this nature of Romantic poetry that it is concerned with the whole gamut of human experience and hence no restriction with regard to choice of subject.

Treatment of Love in Akam and Romantic Poetries

Leaving the other subjects of Romantic poetry aside, if we restrict our comparison to the treatment of love alone even then Akam and Romantic poetries differ in many respects. The most important of the differences may be considered here.

1. The notion and nature of love in Akam has been poetically concocted from actual life and for actual life.[13] It is neither wholly realistic nor wholly idealistic. It is a poetic amalgamation partaking of the best and the desirable from actual life leaving aside the undesirables and the accidentals. That is, the delights of love alone are delineated and the distresses deleted. Obviously therefore, the poet's personal emotions have nothing to do with those represented in Akam. Because it is not a single person's vision or experience but that of a scholarly society through the ages. Even in cases where he or she could be recording his or her own emotions and feelings thereof, they have to be objectified in the conventional norms. Objectivity or impersonality in representation is thus a cardinal principle of poetic expression in the realm of Akam. poetry. And this poetic convention is another key whereby the note of

timelessness and imparticularity is achieved. Idealism relishes neither the particulars nor the personalities.

It is because of such idealised realism in the attitude of love represented in Akam, that it is applicable to every man and woman on the earth beyond the barriers of colour, creed or clan. Universality of appreciation and application is the key note of Akam poetry. Since no other known literature of the world has such poetry of ideally codified love of universal application, Akam poetry is **Universal and Unique** at once.

Love in Romantic poetry is quite personal and individual in all aspects. It is neither conditioned nor governed by any convention or tradition. In most of the cases the romantic poetry sings of the love of the poets. In cases where a romantic poet has represented the emotion of love of some other characters like Keats's" The Eve of St. Agnes" or Isabella, and the like, because of the use of proper names of the characters, it is perrsonal and hence particular.

2. Love in Akam is shown to be transpiring between a man and a woman both of whom have just stepped into adolescence and are unmarried at the time of their first encounter. In case where 'married love' is portrayed, it is always the same pair celebrated in the pre-marital phase.

Romantic lovers are not always unmarried. A married man may be in love with an unmarried woman, with his wife alive or with another married woman. S.T. Coleridge's love[14] for Sara Hutchinson and P.B. Shelley's affair with Mary Godwin are too well- known to need details. Freshness of youth is not a postulate in romantic love.

There are, of course, many Akam poems which speak of the lover's visit to harlots. But such visits are intended only as a poetic device to intensify a phase of marital love called marutam; 'this feeling may be called bouderie '[15] or sulking. Moreover a lover in Akam would not desert his ladylove for ever in preference to a harlot. He would go back to his lady and crave for her forgiveness. No Akam lady would refuse her spouse on this ground. The force of this Akam convention is to enhance the conjugal felicity of the lovers by adding this note of sulking.

3. Love in Akam ends essentially in a peal of wedding bells. There is no celebration of unrequited love in Akam. The term Kaikkiḷai does not

denote unrequited love. It means a mode of love in which a lad falls in love with a lass and commplains of her indifference. It is not unrequited love since the girl has not yet come of age to understand either the pleasures or pangs of love, and hence her coldness. The lad's anguish is generated by his own ignorance of approach.[16]

Had the lass been sexoscient and refused the boy's advances then comes in the question of unrequited love and this sort of love is found in Romantic poetry. For example, the following lines by Lord Byron from his autobiographical poem, **The Dream** reveal his unhappy youthful love-affair with Mary Chaworth:[17]

he had ceased

To live within himself; she was his life

The ocean to the river of his thoughts,

Which terminated all: upon a tone,

A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow,

And his cheek change tempetuously- his heart

Unknowing of its cause of agony.

But she in these fond feelings had no share:

Her sighs were not for him; (Stanza II)

She knew she was by him beloved-she knew,

For quickly comes such kowledge, that his heart

Was darkened with her shadow, and she saw

That he was wretched, but she saw not all. (Stanza III)

4. Akam poetry does not portray the darker sides of love such as loss of life in the case of lovers. Death has no place in it.

In Romantic poetry we quite often hear of a lover weeping over the death of his lady love.

She lived unknown, and few could know

When Lucy ceased to be;

But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me![18]

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
    I aft hae kissed sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
    That dwelt on me sae kindly;
And mouldering now in silent dust
    That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
    Shall live my Highland Mary.[19]

5. There is no treatment of ageing or the mutability of physical beauty in Akam poetry. Where such things are hinted at they only aim at inducing the lover to expedite the progress of love towards marriage in the pre-marital phase or at dissuading the lover from his proposed departure for a distant place in the post-marital phase.[20] No pining by the lover for such a decay is heard. The notion of transience of physical beauty is expressed here not to deter the lover from his pursuit but to make him determined to accomplish it soon and to enjoy it for long.

Romantic poetry on the other hand records such decay, and many poets have given vent to such impermanence. John Keats sings:

Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ...
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

(Ode to a Nightingale)

William Cowper, a master in simple pathos and in portraying the elementary greatness which rests on the most universal human feelings, records such transitoriness of human life as follows:

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow-

'Twas my distress that brought thee low,

My Mary!...

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,

My Mary!...

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last-

My Mary!...

(To the Same)

6. There is no place for intrigue, rivalry, betrayal of love, cuckoldry, etc., in Akam. No rival groom is brought in in this poetry albeit news of his approach is hinted at in order that the lover should gear up his efforts to lead his love to the altar. The rosy side of love alone finds poetic treatment.

All such deviations are found in Romantic poetry. The love-affair of Don Juan, with Julia seven years senior to him (another eccentric feature) is a good example of intrigue and cuckoldry.[21] Sir Walter Scott's **Lochinvar** shows us a rival bridegroom, 'a laggard in love and a dastard in war' almost winning the bride Ellen, when the brave Lochinvar arrives at the bridal feast and rides off with her.

Betrayal of love is also a common feature in Romantic poetry. Hartley Coleridge portrays such betrayal in his song, **She is not fair to**[22] as follows:

Her loveli ness I never knew
    Until She smiled on me ...
But now her looks are coy and cold,
    To mine they never reply,
And yet I cease not to behold
    The love-light in her eye:

Her very frowns are fairer far

Than smiles of other maidens are.

Such betrayal, a passive unrequitedness becomes conscious and voluntary desertion in Romantic poetry. Such desertions are sometimes due to ill-luck and at times due to traitorous behaviour of the lover. For example,

Where shall the lover rest

Whom the fates sever

From his true maiden's breast

parted for ever?

The poet here is sorry for the fateful severance of the lovers.

Where shall the traitor rest,

He, the deceiver

Who could win maiden's breast,

Ruin, and leave her?

Such deceitful behaviour of a lover is not only described but also condemned in Romantic poetry. The poet here chafes with anger and calls down terrible curses upon the lover:

Her wing shall the eagle flap

O'er the false hearted;

His warm blood the wolf shall lap

Ere life be parted:

Shame and dishonour sit

By his grave ever;

Blessing shall hallow it

Never, O never!

Eleu loro

Never, O never!

7. It is clear from lhe points discussed so far that Romantic poetry deals with both the seamy side and the rosy side of love, and more of the former, very less of the latter. The reason is not far to seek. It is due to the essential mood of Romanticism. There prevails in it a sense of aloofness, of yearning and of an agony of the disappearing dream and an unquenchable thirst for the permanence either of the psychic gratification or of the self itself. The reconciliation between their vision and their outer experience, a balance for their spiritual and physical (earthly) aspirations was not realisable in the case of most of the Romaniic poets. What Wordsworth remarks in relation to , Chatterton, the marvellous Boy':

> By our own spirits are we deified:
>
> We poets in our youth begin in gladness;
>
> But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.[24]

and what Keats records from his experience in contrast with the world of the bird:

> The weariness, the fever, and the fret
>
> Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ; ...
>
> Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
>
> And leaden-eyed despairs;[25]

are cases in point answering to such a Romantic mood.

Shelley's **Epipsychidion** is a good example of typical Romantic love. In this most exalted of love songs, Shelley hails Emilia Viviani, a beautiful 19-year-old Italian girl as a 'Seraph of Heaven, too gentle to be human'. Ladies have been many with whom Shelley was in love. Harriet Grove, Mary Godwin, Emilia Viviani are the most important of them. Shelley's conncept of love -' true love' -was also idealistic, but his notion of ideality was spiritual rather than physical. He loved Harriet for her physical beauty and Mary for her intellectual companionship. His love for Emilia was spiritual in origin. He sings:

For in the fields of immortality

My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,

A divine presence in a place divine;[26]

Because of his such concept of love he does not relish the idea of constancy in love and that too with only one person. He voices his protest against the custom that one should love and wed only one lady, at least at one time:

I never was attached to that great sect.

Whose doctrine is that each one should select

Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend ...

With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe

The dreariest and the longest journey go.[27]

For Shelley true love means ideal love, i.e., Platonic Love. He thinks consequently that there is no question of diminishing of one's love even when one is in love with more than one person at the same time. Divisibility of ideal love he seems to emphasize in the following lines:

True love in this differs from gold and clay,

That to divide is not to take away.

Love is like understanding, that grows bright

Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,

Imagination![28]

His comparison of the emotion of love to understanding and imagination takes off the physical attributes of love and places it on the plane of spirituality. This he further ensures by naming his poem epi-psychidion which means, " a little soul upon a soul, a Platonic inner soul... We may translate Epipsychidion as 'a song of praise about the little soul within the soul'."[29]

Emilia Viviani whom Shelley is celebrating in this poem as his lady love, an idealised anima, disillusions him soon by meekly accepting the

husband chosen by her father. Thus even Emilia whom he has celebrated as a 'Seraph', has proved herself to be a 'sod'. Shelley could never achieve his spiritual love since the' sod', the launching pad of the spirit is inevitably anchored to the earth. Hence the never-ending yearning of the lover in Romantic poetry.

Most of the Romantic love poetry being personal or personalised and being too ideal and spiritual to be realised, successful love is seldom portrayed. Most of these love songs, therefore, end on a melancholy note.

There is on the other hand a sense of complete realisation of the emotion of love in Akmn. There are poems of separation (pālai) and pining (neytal) but they are still pleasure-oriented and never peril-mongering. Tamil Poetic convention has so concocted the theory of Akam poetry that the **Sun of delight never sets in the Akam empire.**

8. Objects of Nature do form part of Akam poems. Portrayal of the flora and fauna is copious, but their function is most often ancillary. They serve as a sympathetic background to the human drama. And this too is subject to the room available in the verse form selected. Treatment of Nature in Akam is, therefore, not essential, eventhough elaborate depiction of certain phases of love such as related to Kuṟiñci, Marutam, etc., may entail their inclusion.

Nature is the mainstay for the Romantics. In it all of them found their initial inspiration. But their love poems do not have elaborate treatment of Nature. Their treatment of Nature is a separate major category of Romanticism.

9. There are some supernatural elements in Akam. But, their portrayal is most often only referential, not represented. Being codified as one of the elements of Karupporuḷ they only supplement the other human-background to the main theme (Uripporuḷ) of a poem. They are not, therefore, operative and are never allowed to interfere with the human action.

But in Romantic poetry they are also characters of imporrtance. At times they govern the human action. The ghost in Keats's Isabella merely assists the human action whereas the lady in his La Belle Dame Sans

Merci and the fair Geraldine in Coleridge's Christabel are malignant supernatural creatures obstructing and upsetting the human actions. They have thus a free participation in the plot of the poem and more often than not they emerge victorious over the human characters.

10. Akam poetry consists of individual poems varying in length from three lines to some hundred lines. The entire body of this poetry has been compiled into five anthologies each of which contains poems classified in view of their length. Of these Ainkuṟunūṟu contains 499 poems ranging from 3 to 6 lines each. Kuṟuntokai contains 402 poems ranging from 4 to 8 lines each. Naṟṟiṇai contains 400 poems having 9 to 12 lines each. Akanāṉūṟu has 401 poems having lines between 13 and 31 each. Kalittokai contains 150 poems ranging from 11 to 80 lines each (Kali 6 and 104). Apart from these some more Akam poems are included in Paripāṭal and three poems (mullaippāṭṭU -103 lines, Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu-261 lines and Paṭṭiṉappālai-301 lines) are included in Pattuppāṭtu an anthology of longer poems.[30]

Irrespective of its length each of these poems depicts one and only one phase of Akam love. Each poem is complete in itself. Every poem is, therefore, unitary in theme and structure. Continuous and concatenated narration of more than one phase of love in one poem does not find sanction in Akam poetry.

Romantic poetry has no such deflned structure. Romantic love is depicted in small poems such as those on Lucy by Wordsworth as well as in sustained narrative poems like Keats's, The Eve ot St. Agnes or Byron's Don Juan.

11. There are strict metrical rules with regard to the verse form selected for Akam poetry. No poet of this poetry could have the freedom to violate these. He may have freedom in choosing the verse, say A ciriyam, Kali or Paripatal, but he should conform to the traditional pattern of the verse selected. That is to say he would not invent a form of his own.

But Romantic poets were not at all under any such poetic obligations. They would simply abhor such rules. Ode, ballad, sonnet, lyrics, the alexandrian line were some of the forms which these poets had inherited; but they paid little attention to the convention. They made freely whatever changes they thought fit for their expression. Thus Wordsworth's sonnet

is not of classical pattern; Coleridge's Dejection does not conform to the conventional form of an ode; his Christa bel introduces a new metre;[31] and Burns and Cowper have their own patterns of lyrics. Not only did these romantics change the patterns of the forms they inherited from their predecessors, but also differed from their contemporaries. Thus Keats's odes are different from those of Wordsworth's or Coleridge's; nor does his sonnet conform to the pattern of Wordsworth's. On top of it, even his own odes are not alike in form. His odes To A Nightingale, To Autumn and First Ode to Fanny Brawne differ in respect of stanza pattern such as the number of lines, the metre, the rhyme scheme, etc. Such differences are seen even within one of his Odes namely the First Ode to Fanny Brawne. We are able to see that stamp of individuality and spirit of revolt against conventions are manifest even in the poetic forms they innovated or renovated.

12. There is a poetic proviso in Akam that the main characters related to Uripporul shall have no proper names, but only those associated with their regions like malaiyaṉ, cērppaṉ, etc., or relational names like Talaivaṉ, Talaivai etc., should be used. This is intended to maintain the impersonality of the emotions and to retain the universality of application.

There is no observance of such rules in romantic love poetry. Only proper names are used.

Akam poetry has thus got inviolable poetic conventions with regard to the subject matter and style as well. Neither the subject matter nor the poetic manner has any such restraints over the romantic poet. He is free to choose any subject and any form of expression.

There are thus too many essential differences between the Akam poetry of the Tamils and the Romantic poetry of the West to mistake the one for the other. A deep study of these two kinds of poetry does however, contribute to the widening of our literary perspectives and to the deepening of our poetic sensibilities.

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(4) THE LIFE, INFLUENCE AND DECLINE OF A TAMIL GENRE

Akam - a Tamil genre

The Akam poems of the Cankam period in Tamil literature constitute a literary form, not just a sort of subject matter. As such, it may be seen as belonging to the secondary phase of generic evolution of which scholars like Alastair Fowler have identified three phases viz., primary, secondary and tertiary.[1] Akam genre is one of the two principal forms of literature that flourished in ancient Tamilnad. If the extant quantity of the poems is any indication the Akam poems constitute roughly about 80% of the 2381 poems that have come down to us as the body of Cankam poetry.

Life

An established genre, the Akam poetry carries with it a whole series of prescriptions and restrictions codified in the pronouncements of poeticians like Tolkappiyar. These pronouncements once accepted become characteristic of Akam poetry. They may be summarized as follows:

1. In regard to theme or subject matter Akam deals with heterosexual human love between an ideal pair. Mutual love is an essential and unexceptional prelude to the love depicted here. There is no celebration of unrequited love in Akam.[2]

2. This theme is depicted under ainthinai classifications representing fivefold phases of human love more often than not ensuing consummation. Only then follow the other phases viz., pālai, mullai, marutham and neythal. These may also be subsumed under kalavu and karpu as Tolkappiyar specifies the division.

Each thinai is subclassified into several kūrru or occasions for speech. These thinais and kūrrus have hierarchical relationship. That is to say, thinai, belongs to the higher node while kūrru to the lower node.

3. Akam poetry consists of individual poems varying in length from 3 lines to some hundred lines depending upon the metre chosen. Irrespective of its length each of these poems depicts one and only one phase of

Akam love. Every poem is therefore unitary in theme and structure. Continuous and concatenated depiction of one or more phases in several stanzas does not find sanction in Akam poetry.

4. Each poem is cast in the form of a dramatic monologue and as such, it belongs to the objective type of poetry.

5. There are very many strict rules regarding metrical composition, use of imagery, technique, etc., that condition the composition of Akam poetry.

The Akam poetry with such neatly codified prescriptions and restrictions flourished during the third Cankam period. As such, it co-existed with the heroic age of the Tamils computed roughly between 4th c. BC and 2nd c. CE.

Influence

Genres, like biological species, have a relatively circumscribed existence in space and time. The cultural matrix also limits geners as strictly in time.[3] "The existence of genres is thus considered thoroughly historical."[4] It follows therefore that "an inquiry into the nature of the genres... ramifies out in every direction and involves one's attitude not merely towards literature but also towards life."[5] Not only literary but also extra-literary systems such as political, social, religious and so on contribute significantly to the shaping of literary forms.[6]

With these theoretical notions of transformation of genres, if we approach the subsequent literary period of the Tamils, we could see the changes that have come upon this Akam poetry. The Kural is a good example in this regard. The society that gave birth to the Kural has a world-view different from that of the earlier period. Accordingly the threefold purusharthas formed the theme of Tamil poetry replacing the twofold theme of the Cankam period. Consequently, the theme of Akam ie. human love is given a relatively smaller proportion of poetic treatment. The Kural has three divisions. The third deals with human love with 19% of the total space. Not only a smaller portion, but also a relegated placement. That is, while Tolkappiyam assigned it the first place[7] the Kural assigns it the third place.

Apart from such reduction in thematic proportion and placement, the **Kural** changes the hierarchical status of thinais and kūrrus also. Here kūrru occupies higher node and thinai has to be construed from the former. Another change, there are ten poems on every kūrru more or less concatenated. And all the 250 poems are by one and the same poet. Moreover, the arrangement of the kūrrus as it stands today according to Parimelazhakar seems to be consecutive and historical. Again though there are four chapters on marutham theme, nowhere do we find the character of parattai or courtesan and her direct involvement. Finally the metre has also changed to veṇpā.

All the above departure from the Akam traditions are deviations from or modifications of the Akam genre. Though its influence is still felt in the following of certain terms and concepts of ideal human love and the theme is kept more or less the same, the form and techniques are all changed. The genre has been modified. That is why, even the nomenclature is changed from Akam to Inpam or Kamam. Otherwise **Kural** should have Akathuppal not Kamathuppal. Thus we could see the disintegratinon of the Akam genre, though same of its components still live through.

Influence and revival

The **Kural** belongs to a group of Tamil works collectively called pathiṉeṉkiḻkkaṇakku. At what date and at which stage of the cultural historyof the Tamils these works were collected and given this nomenclature is still a conjecture. On closer scrutiny, this much becomes clear that they do not belong to the same period or to the same cultural ambience that gave birth to them. Of these, some six works deal with the theme of Akam poetry. They are :

Thiṇai mālai nūṟṟaimpatt

Ainthiṇai aimpatu

Ainthiṇai elupatu

Thiṇaimoḷi aimpatu

Kainnilai and

Kār nāṟpatu.

These works tend to differ in their portrayal of human love from their immediate predecessor, the Kural and very strangely tend to be closer to Akam poetry of the Cankam period.

Fixing of the dates of composition to Tamil works, particularly the ancient ones, is a vexed question and this limitation adds to our problem of tracing the evolution of literary forms. Though useful in certain ways, the biological analogy referred to above does not help us very far in this regard. For, unlike biological species, as Todorov reminds us,[8] each new literary form modifies its species. Nor are the modifications uniform. That is why Todorov and many other critics caution us that we should not expect the movement from one genre to another to follow a neat pattern.[9]

These two factors namely dates composition and the irregular and unpredictable pattern of generic evolution make our inquiry more complex. Taking the majority view that the Kural immediately followed the Cankam Age and that the other works of the group might have come later I have described the movement of Akam genre from the Cankam to the Kural. The striking similarity that we encounter in the six above mentioned works of the group baffles us a little. The similarities are as follows:

1. Unlike the Kural. these works have names after the Cankam fashion, viz., thinai, polutu.

2. These are entirely devoted to Akam theme, unlike a portion in the Kural.

3. These poems accord thiṇais the higher node as in the case of Cankam works.

4. These poems are individual in structure : not concatenated as in the Kural.

Now that we have had two moves from the Age of Cankam it is very difficult to explain the reappearance of the pattern with minor changes. If we take the 18 works as contemporaries, then there have to be two kinds of generic change during the same period which is not possible so long as cultural milieu remains the same.

To resolve this tangle We have a very helpful clue in the authorial or prefatory comment of Kanimethaviyar, the author Thiṇaimālai nūrriyaimpathu. It runs like this :

"முனிந்தார் முனிவு ஒழிய ... களவியல்

கொள்கைக்கு இன்தமிழால் யாத்த

திணைமாலை"

If the opinion of the editors of the Rajam edition that these works appeared after the didactic period is acceptable, then this note reveals the fact that the didactic age was hostile, or at least inhospitable to the continuity of Akam tradition in Tamil literature and so replaced it by the revolt to this trend a literary resurgence to revive the old Akam tradition. As Jurii Tynyanov puts it, genres often change through what the Russian formalists call the "law of contrasts".[10] These six works were produced in revolt to the onslaught of didacticism, an allegedly non-Tamil trend that swept over Tamilnad during the post Cankam period. Thus Akam poetry is revived on the heels of the didactic age. Anyway the genre is changed from what it was before. Its influence is alive at this juncture to the extent that it has a lease of life once again. Alastair Fowler's comment is worth quoting here to corroborate this statement. "A genre revived is different from its first avatar and different also from what it would be if works of its type just were not written for a while.[11]

Decline

When we move down further into the corridors of Time, we meet a body of literature composed of two different varieties. One is recognizable as the epic form and the other a collection of devotional songs or hymns. The latter better known as Bhakthi literature comprising the works of Alwars and Nayanmars seems to be using certain components of Akam poetry. Bhakthi movement as we are aware was socio-political in effect and religious in aim and was meant to counter an anti-Tamil spirit that was prevalent among the ruling class and their votaries in arts, as well. As a result the poets of this movement embedded certain characteristics of Akam poetry into their devotional songs. Though their main theme was to sing the praise of the gods of their respective religions, the influence of

the Tamil poetic tradition was so strong that they made use of it in such a way as to suit their purpose. This led to the modification of the Akam genre in its very basic elements and hence it came to be called a different genre altogether. The characteristics of Bhakthi poetry may be epitomized as follows:

1. Its subject matter is bhakthi, no more the human love. It avows not to sing of human beings.

2. It is subjective - lyrical in natrue.

3. The Akam elements included are only of those of palai and neythal - and the lvoe depicted is neither the result of nor is leading to consummation.

4. Several of the modifications run counter to Tamil traditions - eg. talaivi maṭalēruthal, talaivi going out of her residence to meet her partner.

5. The metre has undergone clearcut changes.

6. It is chorus in nature - to be sung and recited.

We are all aware that uripporul is the soul of Akam poetry and that Akam's uripporul is hetero-sexual human love.

Bhakthi poetry transforms this love to man's love for god and as such the Akam tradition can be said to have declined and was no more a genre in its original form.

A form which had its hay day during a long period of the Cankam Ages remained an influential genre during the Didactic period and ceased to be a genre proper after the advent of the Bhakthi literature. A genre is pronounced dead "if works related to it directly are no longer widely read, so that its forms have become unintelligible without scholarly effort."[12] There is nothing unusual about this mutability of forms. Historical changes are irreversible.

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(5) THE IMAGINATIVE STRUCTURE OF UḶḶUṞAI AND IṞAICCI IN AKAM POETRY

The poetry of the age of Caṅkam as we have now in the collected form is highly traditional. The very canvas with its bifurcation in regard to the subject matter has been designed by an academy of scholars over many successive periods to the end of which our present collection belongs. Apart from the canvas the essential techniques of this poetry also seem to have likewise been formulated and passed on to the successive line of poets. Of the various techniques thus formulated suggestion is one.

According to Tolkāppiyam and the old commentaries on the Caṅkam works the technique of suggestion may be handled through three kinds of poetic figures. They are uḷḷuṟai, iṟaicci and Kuṟippu or Cuttu. While Tolkappiyam specifically postulates the nature of uḷḷurai and iṟaicci in the chapters on Akattinai and Poruliyal[1] respectively, the third and more common variety namely Kuṟippu is not defined or described in it. In relation to their use in particular reference to the area of poetry, Kuṟippu is common to Akam and Puram varieties of Caṅkam poetry. There seems to be ample use of this technique in Purananuru and in the collections of Akam poems for example, Ainkurunuru. Though this kind of suggestion is clothed in the form of implied similes commentators have identified them only as Kuṟippu: For example, one may refer to the old commentary on the poems 23/18-22, 200/1-5 and 202/1'1-21 in Purananuru.[2] Of the five hundred poems in Ainkuru nuru, only one (177) is consiidered to have an instance of iṟaicci technique and all the other instances are marked as Kuṟippu by the old commentary preserved in U. Ve. Swaminathier's edition.[3]

Except the fact that these instances of suggestion marked as Kuṟippu do not have the pattern of a simile and that they do not readily disclose their suggestive import as one can see in the case of the other two forms of suggestion, there is no definitive distinction between this and the other two forms. Only one clue remains i.e., this Kuṟippu has no area-distinction in regard to its use and so may be used in both Akam and Puram poetry. And Caṅkam poetry in the light of the commentaries confirms this, though Tolkāppiyam has not postulated any such distinction.

The kind of imagination found used in this kind of suggesstion, i.e., Kuṟippu does not vary very much from that used in the other kinds of suggestion and hence shall better be considered in their context.

Tolkāppiyam prescriptively describes the nature of Uḷḷuṟai in Akattinaiiyal and that of iṟaicci in Poruliyal[4] both being chapters on Akam poetics. Secondly, the old commentators" distinguish these two techniques of suggestion in poems on Akam theme, while in those on Puram, they distinguish the technique as Kuṟippu. Modern scholarship also subscribes to this thematic distinction in the use of these techniques.[5] Uḷḷuṟai and iṟaicci as techniques of suggestion are thus ascribed to Akam poetry. Such an exclusive ascription of a poetic technique to a particular poetic theme is characteristic of ancient Tamil poetics.

Apart from such prescriptive ascription of a technique to a theme, Tolkāppiyam also confines the propriety of use of these techniques to certain characters. This is to say that the techniques of Uḷḷuṟai and iṟaicci may be resorted to only by toli, talaivi and talaivaṉ. Situations which involve the expression of Akam emotions like union, separation and sulking are also marked out as appropriate for the use of these techniques.[6] An analysis of the Caṅkam works in terms of the theme and use of these techniques corroborates with the rules of Tolkāppiyam.[7] These evidences, prescriptive and literary, therefore confirm the opinion that these two techniques of suggestion belong exclusively to the domain of Akam poetry.

The plot of Akam love so conceived and structured has the following elemental characteristics: it is traditional in that it embodies a set of literary conventions in a rigidly ordered form; the canvas is specific; the genre is fixed in many respects; thematically classified into two tinais namely, the five-fold intra Akam and the two-fold extra-Akam; the five-fold emotions to be portrayed; the characters who represent such emotions or who function as catalytic agents in the process of representing the emotions; the various human situations that cause or induce such emotions or that are conducive to realization of such emotions; and prescription of rules of propriety among the characters in regard to the ultimate purport of the overall design itself.

Ullurai and iraicci as techniques of suggestion proper should generally belong to the manner of representation rather than to matter or the plot. But in the realm of Akam poetry it also forms part of the plot, in view of its being confined to a particular theme and in view of the rules of propriety[8] and usage as to when, where, by whom and to what extent these techniques should be employed. The concept of such a plot imbedded with prescriptive rules is the product of imagination in its ultimate origin. That it is described as an acquired and attested tradition in Tolkāppiyam itself may at best point to the history of its success in the annals of Tamil poetics as a mode of representation of human love in ancient Tamil poetry.

What kind of Imagination is' then involved in the conception and use of this technique? Being confined to Akam poetry these techniques belong to the subject matter in terms of their conception. By subject matter we do not mean the end product of the imaginative process, but the very process itself, the very fabrication of the product. In short, we mean here the plot of any literary product. The hand of art essentially concerns in constructing such plots. Aristotle's dictum[9] that plot is the soul of tragedy still holds good and it is so with regard to other forms of poetry also. When we say that Kalittokai poems deal with the theme of Akam, it does not merely mean that it deals with 'love'. Though Akam is about the emotion of love, Akam is not synonymous with love. Love is a raw material (an instinct) while Akam is a certain kind of fabrication of the emotion of love. In other words, **Akam is a plot of love.**

Originality of an art consists in exploring for the first time, the various possibilities of human action-different situations which may involve human action. It is not necessary that such actions or situations should be realizable in terms of reality. It is 'probability' rather than 'possibility' that characterizes the origiinality of a work of art. Exploration of such situations and human actions by an individual mind partakes of the creative activity generally called Imagination. It approximates to the metaphysical concept of secondary Imagination by S.T. Coleridge.[10] It is also analogous to Tolkāppiyar's concept of viṉaiyiṉ niṅki, viḷaṅkiya aṟivu.[11] In perceptional modality it is akin to the Jungian concept of the Unconscious or the Primordial Imagination.[12]

A question may be raised as to how the fabrication of Akam poetry can be said to be at once traditional and imaginative. We can say in clarification that when we say that the plot of Akam love, in its subject matter and in some aspects of poetic manner, is traditional, it does not mean that it was found as such in natural existence like the physical world, the vegetation or the animal kingdom. It means only that it was handed down by one generation to the next. The point is, how could the first generation-the ultimate individual minds-have got it. The probable explanation seems to be that a body of poets, grammmarians, rhetoricians and, scholars in social philosophy, conjugal felicity, etc., would have much exercised their minds in conceiving, analysing and moulding the matter and method of this poetry. Though the finished total product might suggest a co-operative effort, many individuals ought to have had visions, forms, images, classifications, etc, in the crucible of their respective mind's eye, and should have helped in the overall evolution of such a fabrication of Akam love. It is this process of imaginative concoction of Akam poetry that claims, as a poetic pattern, its genesis to what is called Imagination proper or Primary Imagination.

The techniques of Uḷḷuṟai and iṟaicci as part and parcel of Akam love are also, therefore, traditional and imaginative at once. It is true that these two techniques of suggestion in all their notional and notational import could have hardly been created by one individual; it is nonetheless a creation by one tradition which is ultimately a product of imagination. It is not the ingredients of the technique which are just analogous to those of a simile, but the intentional import that calls for a deeper imaginative vision of the probable human situations involved therein. Otherwise, rules like the following in Akam poetics that a particular emotion be expressed by a particular character in a particular situation in a particular manner would become just a rhetorical accident or literary orphan.

So much for the kind of imagination involved in the creation and adoptation of these techniques for Akam poetry. Next point of our interest is to discuss what kind of imagination these techniques employ to bring out their significance.

Both Uḷḷuṟai and iṟaicci as techiques of suggestion use the sensuous perception of imagination as the basic frame of expression. The

components of such frame will always be perceptible to our sensory experience. That is why Tolkāppiyam disallows the use of deity[13] an intangible member of Karupporuḷ, in the technique of Uḷḷurai lest the significance of the intended suggestion should be lost or misunderstood.

This basic frame is usually a situation depicted in the pattern of animal imagery but always implying a human situation. From the viewpoints of both the speaker and the hearer or rather the poet and the reader, a mere sensuous perception of imaginative faculty is not sufficient; the percepted sensory experience should be so analogous to the emotion in question that the possible link from the image to the emotion is forged. This process on either side, therefore, calls into play a kind of ratiocination. Without such analysis the sensuous imagery cannot evoke the intended emotion and consequently the required import of the suggestion would not be brought out. The poet/speaker presents an emotional correlative to the reader/hearer through the faculty of senses, and this link he is able to provide through his perceptive faculty of similarities in the objects of the world. In Coleridgean sense, it is Fancy that is involved in the composition of these techniques. It is again through Fancy that the hearer or the reader is able to grasp the significance of the intended suggestion. An example will make this clear.

There is a poem in Ainkurunuru (95) where the lady of the house responds in the following words to those who have come to seek rapprochment on behalf of her lord who had stopped visiting his home even for food, in preference to the company of courtesans:

> My husband, the lord of our fertile land where the blackhorned buffalo breaks away from its tether early in the morning to feed on tbe rich paddy nearby, has caused me great suffering even during the day.

what the lady has verbally said is that her husband has caused her much distress even during the day. But what she actually wants to suggest to her audience is that her husband was earlier used to desert her during the nights, but of late, he stays both night and day with courtesans in defiance of his avowed fidelity to her. And this she does through iṟaicci by explicitly referring to an analogous situation in the animal world.

The black-horned buffalo, the tether, the pre-dawn opportunity and the paddy field are the images with which the poet perceives a situation analogous to the emotion in question. When the hearer or the reader receives this information through his sensory experience he is able to grasp the suggested message. The situation of a buffalo is not newly created by the poet; it is a common occurrence. The poet's fancy finds in it a suitable image to suggest the furtive behaviour of the lord of the house, which is otherwise too delicate a matter for the lady to discuss with or disclose to her audience. The poet here makes use of the imaginative faculty called Fancy, a synthesizing capacity of the mind with a power of perceiving both similarities and distinctions.

In other words, a set of objects, a situation or a chain of events are imaginatively assoiated as the exact equivalent of the particular emotion. This is done in such a way that when the external facts which "terminate in the sensory experience" are presented the desired suggestion is readily evoked in the mind of the hearer or reader. Portrayal of emotions through such objective equivalents is considered by some connoisseurs of Art a better mode of aesthetic representation.[14] So it is through the aspects of Fancy that the poet conveys the suggestion and it is through the self same Fancy that the reader receives the message.

The faculty of Imagination in both the aspects, "primary" and "fanciful", has thus helped the creation and use of Uḷḷuṟai and iṟaicci as techniques of suggestion in the realm of Akam poetry. The discursive nature of these aspects of Imagination through which these techniques are conceived and employed is one more aspect of the classicality of Caṅkam poetry.

References

1. Uḷḷuṟai. Tol. Porul. I1am. 49, 50, ;51; iraicci: Tol..Porul. Iḷam. 225. 226, 227, 238.

2. See also R. Srinivasan,Canka ilakkiya Uvamaikal (Madras: Aniyakam. 1973), P. 237.

3. Later commentators and critics have nonetheless identified several instances of iṟaicci and Uḷḷuṟai in the poems of this anthology. For instance. see R. Srinivasan, op. clt., pp. 256-261.

4. See n.1.

5. R. Srinivasan, op. cit., P. 228.

6. Tol. Porul. Iḷam. 227 to 236, 239, 240; 297 to 304. Peraciriyar interprets the sutras 294-304 as dealing with Uḷḷuṟai.

7. R. Srinivasan, op. cit. pp. 242-243.

8. Tol. Porul. Iḷam. 50, 51, 225, 226 to 236; Tol. Porul. Pera. 294-304.

9. Poetics, tr. T. S. Dorsch, Classical Literary Criticism (Penguin Books, 1965), P. 40.

10. Biographia Literaria, Chapt. XIII.

11. Porul. Iḷam. 640; also see the present author's Mutual Flames (Madras: Thiranaayvu Nuulagm, 1977), pp. 16-27.

12. C. J. Jung, "Psychology of Literature", in 20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1972). pp. 174-188.

13.Tol. Porul. Iḷam. 50.

14. T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays, 3rd edn. (1951, rpt. London: Faber and Fabor Ltd, 1976), P. 145.

(6) AN EPIC SANS A HERO?

"Who is a hero?" "What is heroism?" are questions more usually posed than answered. These terms are so common place in Literary discussions that they have become blunt through excessive use. The calling of critics requires sharpened tools not blunted ones.

"The Hero, we are told, has a thousand faces"[1]. But this is not a useful definition, though true. "The term "hero" is used to designate the Principal Character in an action, usually a narrated action, where this character arouses admiratin or approval."[2] This is workable. But what is "an action?" The hero is one" who is wrestling with fate or fortune in either narrative or drama" and "he is beoynd the average of mankind in physcial or spiritual power and strength or in both".[3] The hero is then such a principal character and his ability to wrestle with fate or fortune is his heroism. This character arouses admiration or approval of his society in that "he is beyond the average man". As such the hero is the literary pointer to the cultural values of his society and his heroism is its ideal index.

Apart from this primary and functional definition, there is also a secondary and associate definition of the hero. By this, a hero is the man with whom the "heroine" is involved in a love relationship and who need not be the character of "any independently admirable action."

With such aspects of hero and heroism in mind let us inquire, "who is the hero of Cilappathikaram. The unwary answer - a popular one of course - is Kovalan. Let us sift this view.

(1) Is Kovalan the principal character?

(2) Does he wrestle with fate or fortune? In other words does he act in such a way as to constitute a struggle against his fate or fortune? Does he wrestle and overcome the predicament?

(3) Does his action arouse admiration or approval of the society? And is he an index of the ideals of his age or culture?

Kovalan is a character in this epic. But he is not the chief protagonist of the action in that (a) the title of the epic does not concern him, but the anklet (cp. other epics Manimekalai, Civakacintamani, etc.); (b) his action

does not sustain the entire epic as he is felled down at the end of the 16th canto in a work of 30 cantos; (c) and that the epic does not introduce him first in keeping with the Indian epic tradition. He is not, therefore, the principal character of the epic.

What does Kovalan do in the course of the epic action? Married to Kannaki he spends some years with her. Then deserts her and lives with Matavi whom also he deserts on false charges. On return to Kannaki he feels not for his desertion of her but for the loss of his wealth. Encouraged by Kannaki's amiability, he sets out on a journey to Madurai is to make good the loss. En route, he does nothing but follow the hermitess Kavundi, 'though his speech and actions do indicate the nobility of his character. The flash back narration of his compassion and patronage of the needy and spirit of sacrifice for others' sake does not concern us here since that does not constitute the epic action (we do not know whether he did such acts of nobility before or after the marriage ie. start of the epic action). In Madurai he praises Kannaki and feels really for his desertion of her. But he also feels so for Matavi on receipt of her second letter. Promising to return with money after selling her anklet, Kovalan leaves Kannaki for the market and dies there as a thief. This is the 16th canto. And the epic continues for another 14 cantos. That is to say, Kovalan disappears from the essential epic action in the middle.

Now to our question (2), does Kovalan wrestle with fate of fortune? He does not. His decision to leave Puhar for Madurai is not a combat with fate or fortune. His arduous and strenuous journey on foot (unaccustomed to, of course) for Madurai does not constitute his wreslting. Were it so, then Kavundi Adigal also could claim such title.

What is his predicament? Utter poverty (ilampatu)? Did he overcome this? No, in the very act of selling the anklet he becomes a victim to the cunning goldsmith. He comes to Madurai to erace his poverty of which he is ashamed, but in deed he earns another disgrace, to die as a thief. There is thus no struggle against fate or fortune. There is fate; there is Kovalan; but there is no conflict between them. He just succumbs to it unwittingly.

To our questin (3) does Kovalan's action arouse admiration or approval? Kavundi Adigal commends him at times but only in company

with Kannaki. Matalan is full of praise for Kovalan. But for what? Not for what he does in the course of the epic action, but for what he did before. Even so, Matalan does not condone his cruelty to Kannaki. Only thinks aloud about such extreme behaviour of Kovalan. Desertion of Kannaki and his odyssey on foot to Madurai are the only items of his action. We have no one-neither the author nor any characters - who congratulates and commends Kovalan for these. Senguttuvan feels sorry for the plight of the Pandyan King and praises him for his instantaneous death; speaks admiringly of the Pandya Queen; and is bewitched by the relation of Kannaki's presence in his territiory, but neither he nor his queen has anything to say about Kovalan. Neither has posterity developed after him any cult-as Kovalan cult-approvingly. He is of course, an index of the age, not for emulation but for rejection.

Since his action does not thus fulfil the heroic requirements Kovalan is not the hero of Cilappathikaram. And who is then?

(1) It is Kannaki. She is the Principal character in that (a) the title of the epic concerns her; (b) the epic introduces her first in line with the tradition[4] (c) the epic starts with here as a bride and ends with her deification and thus the main action of the epic centres around her.

(2) It is again Kannaki who wrestles with fate and fortune. Deserted by Kovalan, she is a smiling mounment of patience without complaining. Her faith in her husband is manifest in her denial to seek the god's help to retrieve him; readily accompanies him to Madurai in spite of her daintiness and extracts glowing tributes from Kavundi, very frugal in commending others. The climax of her combat with fate starts with the execution of Kovalan as a thief. The monument of patience turns into a righteous volcano; demands justice from the public; on their dumbness she meets the king who realising his error drops down dead; unabated, her anger burns down the city and she leaves for the Cera country where she is deified. Retrival of her husband's name in such an alien and weird situation with her charstity begotten strength of her spirit is the acme of her heroism.

(3) Kannaki's heroic action arouses admiration and approval, proof of which is the third Book of the epic. Martial heroism of Senguttuvan is made subservient to Kannaki's moral heroism. Her deification witnessed by several royal personages and the poet's determination to sing of her

glory through this epic are the climactic pointers to the contemporary admiration and approval, while the inception of the 'Pattinicult' and its propagatin by festivals, popular and religious, to date, is a testimony to the admiration and approval of her heroism as an ideal index of the culture by the posterity.

How do we come upon the snag then? Scholars from Aristotle onwards tended to consider only man as heroic. This is due to their conception of heroism in physical terms, applicable of course, to the heroes of their milieux. Heroic action, none the less, need not always he physical; it may be intellectual (Ulysses) or pies (Aeneas) or moral (Adam & Christ). In Tamil Literature the very first epic portrays moral heroism exhibited by a Woman of impeccable chastity.

Accordingly then, heroism is bisexual. "A woman can be a "hero" in the same sense as a man, and in such case "heroine" merely marks the change of gender."[5] "The hero, therefore, is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms.[6]

Notes

1. Bernard F. Huppe, "The concept of the Hero in the Early middle Ages" in Concepts of the hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (eds) Norman T. Burns and Christopher Reagn (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1976) p. 1.

2. R.R. Bolgar, "Hero or Anti-Hero", Op.cit., p. 120

3. Morton W. Bloomfield, "The Problem of the Hero" op. cit., p. 29

4. Arumpatavuraikarar, Cil. 1:28-29

5. R.R. Bolgar, op.cit., p. 142, n.1

6. Joseph Camphell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces. (London : Sphere Books Ltd., 1975), p. 24

(7) THE HEROIC PATTERN IN CILAPPATIKĀRAM

Every Age and every Culture has had its own concept of the heroic. The arts in general and the literatures in special of the respective Age and Culture have portrayed such ideal patterns of heroism. As custodians of culture, epic forms of literature have had greater scope of giving expression to such ideals. An attempt is made in the following pages to investigate as to what type of heroism is held up as the ideal one in Cilappatikāram.

Epic poetry in Tamil starts with Cilappatikaram (Cil.) composed by Ilanko Atikal. Though scholarly opinions differ as to its exact date of composition,[1] most of them agree that it followed the age of Cańkam poetry and that it is the first epic poem in Tamil.[2]

The term Cilappatikāram means the story or description of Cilampu, the jewelled anklet; the anklets worn by Kannaki have a key role in the epic action. It amounts to this that Cilappatikāram is the story of Kannaki. The other major personages of the epic are Kovalan, Matavi, the Pandiya king and the Queen, and the Chera king and his queen. Though the epic story thus involves kings and queens and other male characters, none of them seems to be the chief protagonist of the epic. This leads us to the question, "Who is the hero in Cilappatikaram?"

Definition of an epic hero

The fcllowing descriptive definition of a hero by R.R. Bolgar of King's College, Cambridge University is central and serviceable:

> The TERM "hero" is used to designate the principal character in an action, usually a narrated action, where this character arouses admiration or approval. Heroes have their importance for the history of culture because . tbey serve to show us what traits and types of behavior have enjoyed public favor.[3]

In accordance with this definition, an epic hero is one who is the principal character in the epic action and who arouses admiration or approval of the respective society.

Kannaki - the principal character

The epic action of Cilappatikāram stretches into 30 cantoes. Kovalan is dead in the 16th Canto. Matavi's role ends with the 8th canto. The Pandiya kIng's action is limited to cantoes 16 and 20. The Chera king's participation in the epic action is confined to the last six cantoes. Kannaki's action on the other hand pervades the whole epic:[4] the first canto describes her marriage with Kovalan and the last canto depicts her deification as the goddess of Chastity. The very title of the epic suggests that the epic is about Kannaki. Structurally speaking, therefore, Kannaki is the principal character of the epic action.

The first canto which describes the marriage between Kannaki and Kovalan introduces first not Kovalan the groom, but Kannaki tbe bride. Arumpata uraikarar, the first commentator on this epic explains this by saying that the poet introduces first Kannaki because she is the heroine i.e., the chief character in the story.[5]

An important characteristic of Indian epics in general and of Tamil epics in special is apotheosis of womanhood.[6] Partaking of this spirit, Cilappatikaram sings the praise of Kannaki as a Paragon of Chastity.[7] It is indeed a Temple of Letters raised in honour of Kannaki.[8] Thematically also, therefore, Kannaki is the principal character of the epic.

The Heroic pattern in Cilappatikāram

Kannaki's patience during her husband's desertion, her ready response to Kovalan's plans to leave for Madurai, her love for Kovalan in spite of his desertion which she shows by accompanying him on the arduous journey, her tragic grief at the news of her husband's death at the hands of the king, her defiant spirit in arguing with the king and proving her husband's innocence, her fiery frenzy which burns down the city of Madurai, and finally her ascent to heaven invited by the angels - one and all of these traits of her character - have been admired by almost all the characters in the epic itself. All such aspects of her character - patience, faith, love, righteous anger and forgiveness are enshrined in the Tamil word "Kaṟpu", which for want of a more comprehensive term may be translated as "Chastity" in English, though much of the cultural colour is lost in such translation.

Being thus the principal actor in the story arousing "approval" and "admiration" by her action, Kannaki is the chief protagonist i.e., the heroine in Cilappatikāram.[9]

Female heroism

When we say that Kannaki is the "heroine" of Cilappatikāram, we do not mean that she is the wife of the hero, but that she is the "hero" of the epic, and "heroine" marks here simply the change of gender. In the opinion of R,R. Bolgar,

> A woman can be a "hero" in the same sense as a man, and in such cases "heroine" merely marks tbe change of gender.[10]

Joseph Campbell who has analysed several cultures of our human race in terms of the concept of the "hero" and the "heroic" has arrived at a similar concusion when he says:

> The hero, therefore, is the man or woman ...[11]

The term "hero" can be, therefore bisexual in conception.[12] In this respect Cilappatikaram is the first epic in Tamil literature and perhaps even in Indian literature which depicts a woman as the chief protagonist in an epic poem.[13]

It is interesting to note that this first epic poem in Tamil has portrayed a "woman hero", while most of the ancient and Medieval epics of the world have chosen to depict "male heroism".[14] European literature comes to witness such a trend in the conception of hero only in the 14th century, when Boccaccio "introduced decisively women as heroines of the flesh as well as of the spirit..."[15]

> By upsetting the cannonical, classical and medieval tradition of the 'treatises on heroes and illustrious men ... Boccaccio for the first time was to portray 106 women, ... as protagonists in human history ... he was to find a place also for women raised to the rank of heroines ...[16]

Though the works of Boccaccio do not belong to epic poetry, his is a daring attempt in blazing the trail for the introduction of women as "heroines".

Plebeian heroism

Another interesting fact about this epic is that while most of the ancient and medieval epics of the world have portrayed kings, nobles, dukes and great warriors as heroes, Cilappatikaram depicts the heroism of a woman, an ordinary citizen of the merchant class. Another Tamil epic Manimekalai which might have followed Cilappatikaram in spirit and theme, goes one step further and depicts the heroism of Manimekalai, an accomplished lady belonging to the family of courtesans. Heroization of a plebeian i.e., the commoner is something unknown or unheard of in the realm of European epic poetry. It is again Boccaccio who chooses to portray the middle class heroes and heroines, breaking the tradition of portraying heroes of high birth. His heroines include middle class women "or even just humble working-class women".[17]

Patterns of Heroism

The epic literature of the world has given expression to various kinds of heroic acts. The exploits of a warrior hero against heavy odds have found the earliest expression. Whether an Achilles; a Hercules, an Arjuna, a Theseus or a Beowulf, it was their martial feats that aroused admiration and approval, and won the public favour. Such a kind of heroic action is called **martial heroism.** In the course of human history, we observe a trend that prefers human intelligence to mere physical prowess as an admirable trait of heroism. This gives rise to the intellectual hero, the first known representative of which is Ulysses of the Odyssey. As centuries wear away even the efficacy of intellectual beroism as a heroic pattern was questioned and discarded. Eventually the ccncept of moral heroism gained currency in the world of letters. This seems to be the evolutionary pattern of heroism in the West, if the known history of the European epic poetry is any guide.

An analysis of the heroic patterns of the major epics of the West might reveal that these three patterns of heroism comprise of several associative aspects of heroic behaviour. Accordingly we observe traits like physical fortitude, pride, anger. lust, etc., usually associated with martial heroism; talents like vain wisdom, deceit and powers of rhetoric associated with intellectual heroism, and qualities like wisdom, valour, humility, obedience. resistance to temptations, charity, chastity, etc.,

with moral and spiritual heroism. Such evolutionary nature of epic heroism can be taken as an index of the ideals and aspirations of our human culture, besides being an interesting sidelight of our social progress in terms of tbe use of tbe body, the intellect and the mind of Man. A discussion of Cilappatikaram in the light of this frame of epic heroism as our reference may be useful to understand the earliest concept of the ideal of heroism of the Tamils.

Martial heroism : Physical fortitude

An important aspect of Martial heroism, physical fortitude stands for the hero's physical powers by the use of which he overcomes his heroic predicament. Kannaki the heroine does not exhibit physical courage or strength. Her consigning to flames the city of Madurai is not in virtue of her physical prowess but through her spiritual strength begotten of moral rectitude viz., chastity. So Cilappatikaram does not portray this martial aspect as applied to the chief protagonist of the epic.

Kovalan

Of the male characters, Kovalan is depicted as resorting to the use of his physical prowess once. On the birthday of his child Manimekalai, an old Brahmin bent with age comes feebly to receive gifts from Kovalan. Seeing him in the clutches of a furious elephant Kovalan steps forth instantly and rescues the old man, without hurting the elephant. Related by Matalan, in a flashback narration, this incident attests to the physical fortitude of Kovalan. But he makes use of his physical prowess not to fight against an enemy or an opponent to get over his predicament nor to establish his valour in a contest. He resorts to the use of his strength only to save a decrepit old man from being killed by a must elephant. This incident testifies to his kind and compassionate disposition towards the helpless and the weak. This Is borne out by the poet's description of Kovalan as "Karunai maravan" (15: 53) which means "merciful hero". It is certainly a heroic act but not one of pure physical heroism. It may be called "Daya Viram", in accordance with the classification of types of heroism by severai Sanskrit aesthetes.[18]

Cenkuttuvan

Cenkuttuvan wages wars against the kings of the north beyond the Ganges who oppose him on his way to the Himalayas. After fierce battles he subdues all opposition resulting in the death of several warriors. Kanaka and Vljaya, two of his chief opponents are made to carry the stone intended for Kannaki's statue.

Depiction of wars and battles whether real or feigned is an important characteristic of epic poetry. Ilanko Atikal inherits a literary tradition represented by the Puram poems and Tolkappiyam following which he depicts wars and battles in his epic,[9] devoting one full canto (26) for the purpose.

These details tend to prove that there is a plea for military warfare in Cilappatikaram, and since Cenkuttuvan is shown victorious his action partakes of martial heroism. But this is only apparent. For, a true warrior hero is one who himself personally fights a war or battle and inflicts personal defeat on the opponent. His personal physical prowess should be put to test which he should more often than not stand successfully. Cenkuttuvan does not seem to have had such personal combats. It is only his army, his martial agent that does the fighting. Again, a warrior hero is one who is the principal character in the main action of an epic. As such the Chera king is not the hero in Cilappatikaram. And consequently, therefore, his action cannot be said as partaking of warrior heroism.

Why does he then go on the expedition to the north? This he does to bring a stone from the Himalayas for carving an image of Kannaki whom be has decided in consultation with his wife to deify as Goddess of Chastity.[20] The poet makes the king himself declare the reason for his expedition:

If the king of high mountains ... does not give us the stone needed to carve an image of the great Lady of Chastity, then we, ... shall demonstrate to these ... [21]

This aim is reinforced by his minister Villavan kothai when he says:

> The object with which our king goes to the Himalayas is to bring a stone on [sic] which to carve the image of a deity.[22]

Cenkuttuvan's northern expedition is thus not military in view. He is only a 'royal servant' of Kannaki. The poet depicts the military heroism of Cenkuttuvan as subservient to the propagation of the worship of Kannaki's moral and spi'ritual heroism.[21] Martial valour is subordinated to moral and spiritual supremacy.

Cenkuttuvan seems to have a secondary aim also in his military expedition. For, when Sanjayan the ambassador to Nurruvar Kannar 'submitted to him that they would bring him the required stone, he lays open his heart:

Kanaka and Vijaya, and other northern monarchs, with unrestrained tongues ... spoke disparagingly and in ignorance of the valour of Tamil kings. With exceeding wrath, even like the God of Death, this army marches forth.[24]

It is evident that Cenkuttuvan also entertained in his heart a desire for military supremacy. As in the South, he does not brook any opposition in the North. That is why he chooses to go in for a stone from the Himalayas rather than from the Potiyil. He is the only person in the epic who betrays his predilection for military glory. This the poet is not in sympathy with. So he is chastised through a long sermon by Matalan, a sort of Indian Tiresias who seems to see all and know all. When Cenkuttuvan becomes wrathful at the slighting remarks of the - Chola and Pandiya kings as reported by his messengers,[25] Matalan perceives that he wants to punish them. Matalan makes him see the point by his persuasive arguments that neitner wealth nor youth will last for ever and that he should therefore desist from battles and wars and should perform virtuous deeds and sacrificial rites.[26] Consequently Cenkuttuvan eschews his wrath; releases the captive kings of the north and treats them as his guests with honour due; performs sacrifices and orders for the consecration of Kannaki.[27] Sublimated thus the martial deeds of Cenkuttuvan are depicted as subservient to a higher form of heroism exemplified by Kannaki. As such Cilappatikaram reflects the predilections and preferences of the culture that has produced it.

Intellectual Heroism

Under this pattern of heroism, the protagonist makes use of the powers of his intellect rather than his physical prowess to overcome the heroic

dilemma or predicament. "Sapience", stratagems, deceit and powers of rhetoric are the salient aspects of intellectual heroism.

Sapience or Vain Wisdom

The royal goldsmith in Cilappatikaram is not given a major role. But even in his minor role he becomes significant by devising and bringing about the catastrophe viz., Kovalan's death. His knowledge of thieves and their modus operandi is complete. When the city guards hesitate to execute the order of the Pandiya king on the grounds that Kovalan does not appear to be a thief, the goldsmith explains at length the eight ways that thieves employ to deceive their innocent victims.[28] Such an exhaustive knowledge of thieves the goldsmith does not put to good use; be uses it only to cover his own theft. Apart from this, his knowledge is being used to condemn an innocent man. As such his knowledge becomes "sapience", "Vain Wisdom", and hence applied to a character whom the epic disapprovingly describes as messenger of Death, murderous goldsmith, treacherous person, etc.[29]

Rhetoric

The goldsmith uses his powers of rhetoric to persuade the executioners to kill Kovalan. He uses his knowledge about thieves and their "modus operandi" to convince them of his stand. Tbe point is that the city guards-the executioners-are correct in their opinion that Kovalan does not look like a thief.[30] The guards are more qualified to decide whether a person is a thief of not, since it is their vocation. But the rhetorical powers of the goldsmith are so compelling that one of the guards starts giving supporting evidences to the skills and magical powers of thieves narrated by the goldsmith.[31] The goldsmith not satisfied with his persuasion reminds them of the king's order failing which they would be punished. All upon a sudden a drunken guard hews Kovalan into two.[32]

Since the powers of rhetoric are used for bringing about the tragic end of an Innocent person, Cilappatikaram portrays such intellectual powers as undesirable and unheroic.

Moral and Spiritual heroism

This is a pattern of heroic act or acts in the performance of which moral considerations and spiritual significance receive greater attention.

The protagonists in this pattern do not give exclusive weight to physical prowess or even to intellectual abilities. They subordinate these two qualities to moral rectitude or spiritual ends so as to ensure human happiness at the initial stage and to attain spiritual bliss in the final stage. Moral and Spiritual valour, true wisdom, and chastity are the chief aspects that are discussed here under this pattern.[38]

Moral and Spiritual Valour

This aspect is taken to mean act or acts of physical strength and martial valour used to establish or defend moral and spiritual principles; employed as a means of serving moral and spiritual purposes.

Kovalan and Cenkuttuvan are the two characters in the epic who are depicted as making use of their physical prowess or martial valour. They are not, however the chief protagonists of the epic. Kovalan's physical fortitude is used as we have seen earlier, for relieving the dislress of an elderly man. Though he is capable of controlling a must elephant, he is not portrayed as resisting or even attempting to resist the unjust onslaught of the city guard who hews him into two. Nor is Cenkuttuvan shown as resorting to the use of his martial power to extricate himself from any heroic dilemma. His expedition to the north, though military in character, is not aimed at any heroic exploits of a warrior-hero type. It is only a tool in the service of virtue. Cilappatikāram depicts therefore, the physical fortitude of Kovalan and the military valour of Cenkuttuvan as subservient to a nobler cause-the cause of virtue which is moral in the case of Kovalan, and spiritnal in the case of Cenkuttuvan. We are reminded of a parallel heroic ethos in the Aeneid where the pius Aeneas is constrained to wage a war with Turnus since the latter thwarts his purpose of founding the city of Rome-a 'divine' mission thrust on Aeneas. This is the first instance in the European epic tradition to subordinate the spirit and aim of warrior heroism to a something higher and nobler aspect of heroism; in other words, an instance of sublimating the use of physical force for a better and nobler cause-may be Virgil's critique of his tradition, the epics of Homer.

It is very interesting to note that the very first epic of the Tamils does not depict martial volour as heroic, but portrays it is subservient to the cause of moral and spiritual heroism.

True Wisdom

This term means knowledge of any branch of human pursuits acquired by the protagonists through study, counsel or experience, put to right use; knowledge as a means of achieving loftier aims. It is also taken to mean one's powers of intellect in taking appropriate decisions in the given situations.

Kovalan is a lover of arts. He is good at music. It is his love of arts that takes 'him to Matavi.[34] His preference of art to virtuous conduct in life is his weakness which ruins him. By ascribing such misplaced preference to Kovalan, the epic rejects such knowledge as an aspect of character.[35]

Matavi, a courtesan of Pukar is well-versed in all the arts required of her calling viz., dance, music and beauty. She wins the title Talaikkol the supreme royal honour for an artist. It is such artistic excellences that lure Kovalan to her abode. Her love of art as a discipline is so great that she continues to perform and sing even during Kovalan's stay with her. But this does not mean that she too preferred art to life. For, when she comes to know of Kovalan's tragic end, she not only renounces the life of an artist and becomes a nun, but also makes her daughter Manimekalai become a nun even in the prime of her life.[36] The epic shows approvingly that Matavi has realized the respective merits of art and virtuous life. She makes use of it so long as Kovalan is with her. Without him she has no use for it and hence her renunciation. Her knowledge of art has become wisdom of life.

Chastity

Chastity is considered here as conjugal fidelity. Pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships are considered unchaste. It is also considered as bisexual in character i.e., male chastity and female chastity. Whereas male chastity has a closed definition of meaning conjugal fidelity, female chastity is a comprehensive term in the Indian tradition. It includes one's fidelity, aspects like acceptance of the husband as her supreme head in almost all the domestic affairs, love for him in terms of looking after his comforts, family honour, etc., and willingness to sacrifice herself in the interest of anyone, of these aspects. "To the ideal wife, her husband is as the very breath of her life, and is as indispensable in death as in life." [37] In

short, she would not survive him. As such it has cultural characteristics. Of these, Cilappatikaram is chiefly concerned with female chastity even though male chastity is also impliedly dealt with.

Male chastity

In his own words, Kovalan's infatuation with Matavi results in the ruin of his wealth and glory.[38] It is to redeem his wealth and glory by doing some business that he takes the road to Madurai with Kannaki. It is in search of some one who may buy his wife's anklet that he dies the death of a common thief. All of Kannaki's miseries and those of his parents, his in-laws and those of Matavi, besides the voluntary deaths of Kavunthi Adigal and Madhari, issue ultimately from his not being faithful to Kannaki. Kannaki tells Kovalan in his face :

> Though you have lapsed from virtue -into vice, I just followed you as I am constant and unswerving from the path of virtue.[39]

The poet himself exhorts his audience towards the end of the epic:

> Avoid other people' wives ... Protect the household virtues ... Abstain immediately from drinking, theft, lust, falsehood and useless company.[40]

By this exhortation to avoid others' wives, the poet stresses male chastity. When he says that Kovalan forgot his "own unsullied home and wife", the poet suggests that his life with Matavi is "sullied", i.e., Kovalan is sullied.[41]

Poet Ilango Adigal rejects the pattern of Kovalan's domestic life by portraying him as "fallen"; The poet shows by such portrayal that bisexual chastity is essential for a perfect and harmonious domestic bliss which in turn generates similar harmonies at the social and even national levels. Disturbance of such harmonious peace a t the social and national levels is shown in Cilappatikāram to be ultimately owing to its absence at domestic level. And hence its implied emphasis in the epic.

Female chastity

Kannki's conjugal fidelity is unquestionable. For that matter Indian heroines are, in most of the classical works, unquestionably faithful. But

in no other Indian epic the virtue of chastity has been raised to the level of epic heroism.

Chastity in Tamil culture consists also in the wife's regarding her husband as her supreme head, even gods not excepted. The Kural (55) is the ultimate source of authority for such a conception of an aspect of chastity. Kannaki's polite refusal to accede to her friend Tevanti's suggestion to pray to the god of Love in order that she may get her husband retrace his steps is commented upon and commended in this light by critics. Her implicit obedience to Kovalan when he asks her to follow him to Madurai springs from such conception of chastity.

Kannaki is all love for Kovalan. That she puts up with his sojourn with Matavi for years is an expression of such unqualified love. She does not complain of his desertion even to his parents. When he returns from Matavi, and speaks self reproachfully of his shameful conduct, she is still unabated in her love for him that she offers her anklets to cheer him up. Even after the tedious journey to Madurai on foot, she continues to love him as selflessly as before and this is borne out from her interest in preparing and serving the dishes herself for him, an expression of a chaste wife's love for her hushand.

Not to bedeck herself with flowers, cosmetics and ornaments is another aspect of chastity portrayed in this epic. While Kovalan is away Kannaki does not put on any ornaments nor does she apply any cosmetics.[43] This aspect of Chastity, developed into a love-motif perhaps, is portrayed in Jeevakacinthamani and Kambaramayanam also.[44]

That these aspects of Kannaki's chastity "aroused admiration or approval" is evident from the remarks made, by other characters in the epic who may be taken to represent her contemporary society. The proper person to appreciate the chastity of a wife is the husband himself. So the poet makes Kovalan to speak about Kannaki's virtues. In the city of Madurai Kovalan praises Kannaki:

> You left your old parents, your friends, your attendants ... and kept at your service only your modesty, your faith, your virtue, and your loyalty ... You are the incarrnation of faithfulness, the beacon of the World, the tender bud of chastity, the store of all virtues.'[45]

Kannaki's selfless love for her husband forces Kavunthi Adigal, who accompanies them to Madurai to commend her:

> Oblivious of her own suffering this celebrated lady, although fainting from thirst in the scorching sun, felt more keenly the suffering of her husband. We ... have not seen any shining deity other than this goddess who has taken the vow of chastity necessary to devoted house wives.[46]

The chief maid of Kannaki attests to her implicit obedience to Kovalan :

> (Kannaki) had nothing to say to the mother ... nor even a word for the nurse ... nor for me either, but followed her husband remembering only her duty as a true wife.[47]

One more aspect of chastity depicted in Cilapatikaram is the wife's choosing to die as soon as the husband is dead. The Pandiya queen who breathes her. last the moment the king swoons to death is portrayed as representing this aspect, styled as āṟiya kaṟpu or catvikak kaṟpu meaning "serene chastity".

Kannaki's moral victory

Kannaki is not portrayed as observing this principle of virtue. She survives Kovalan; because she has a duty to perform. Love for her husband also includes preservation of her husband"s reputation. Now that Kovalan has been killed as a thief, she has a duty to prove his innocence and retrieve his reputation.

This duty entails an uphill task on her. The odds against her are many; the place is strange; the contender is the king of' an alien country; and she a woman with no support to reckon with. The calm and obedient wife flares up.

Before meeting the king she consults the Sun-god as to the truth of the case, who says that Kovalan is not a thief and the city which punished him would be soon in flames. Not fully satisfied with this, she vows to know of the truth from the mouth of Kovalan himself, who on being touched by Kannaki comes to life and asks her to stay behind.

She meets tbe king afterwards and proves that Kovalan is not the thief. Her agony of losing her husband in a strange land and that too in an ignoble way knows no bounds. She becomes fiery and frenzied, and in such a mood burns down the city of Madurai to avenge her husband's unjust death. Such a ferocious aspect of chastity is styled as **ciṟiya kaṟpu** meaning "fiery fidelity".

Kannaki's heroic act thus consists in her retrieving the reputation of her husband from the mouth of the king himself and from the supernatural agencies like the sun-god, and in her burning down the city in vengeance.

This represents a heroic motif-an epic formula-in the pattern of a struggle, an opponent and the final victory. Such a heroic code portrays Kannaki's moral victory-victory begotten of her impeccable chastity.

Kannaki's spiritual victory

The triumph of Kannaki's chastity is not confined to her moral victory alone. She has not yet reached the acme of her evolution. She has plucked her breast out, but she has not plucked out her pride of chastity. she vows on it to burn the city; she has accordingly burnt the city; but she has not burnt off her anger. She has won the king, but has not won herself, her ego. Her pride, her anger, and her victory are all no doubt begotten of her moral rectitude. The Sun-god testifies to her power of moral purity.[50] But in spite of all these virtues she is advised by Mathurapathi, the patron goddess of Madurai to wait for a fortnight to join her husband who is in heaven now. What could this mean? This means, most probably, that she has to shed these negative moral attributes-anger, pride and ego however righteous they may be-before being received into heaven.

Mathurapathi's relation of the past events that led to her domestic tragedy open Kannaki's eyes.[51] Realization dawns on her that it was not she who has killed the king; it was not she who has burnt the city dnwn; it is according to the great Design that Kovalan dies as a thief; the Pandiya king deviates from the path of virtue and the City of Madurai is burnt up. She is now able to see that she is only a tool in the hands of the great Order, the great Scheme of things.[52]

Such realization engendered by the sympathetic narration of the goddess helps her conquer herself. The last words she utters in her human form consolidate her conquest over herself:

Alas, I am a great sinner.[53]

Shedding thus her ego Kannaki waits patiently for her husband and meets him in the form of a celestial. This happens in the 23rd canto.

Kannaki's tears of contrition have purified her conscience; have resolved her conflict; but they have not cleansed the stain she caused to the reputation of the Pandiya king. Kannaki might have felt it when she repented as above but she does not elaborate it at this stage.

We meet her next in the 29th canto in the form of an angel after her deification. Her friends from Pukar have come to witness her deification. They explain the events that took place after her leaving the world-the end of her parents, her in-laws, Matavi and others. King Cenkuttuvan the chief architect of her deification exclaims in wonder of her appearance in angelic form; But Kannaki has no words of praise for Cenkuttuvan; no words of consolation for her friends or for others. Kannaki as an- angel just says :

> The Pandiyan is blameless. He is now a good guest in the palace of the king of gods. I am his daughter.[54]

Her vision is no more cloudy, She has reached a level whereat the differences in terms of one's actions and their results blur and disappear; and at which the identity is no more physical, nor casuistic nor even moral, but only spiritual.[55] She has no message to the world except extricating the Pandiya king from his blame by not only forgiving him but by claiming kinship with him. For we know "To err is human, to forgive divine." We may modify Pope's line a little and say, to be vengeful Is human, to forgive divine. Kannaki has reached the heights of human evolution, the ideal end of human evolution i.e, to partake of the divine attributes through her experience and through her self-conquest.[56]

In her efforts to overcome her peculiar predicament, Kannaki represents a pattern of heroism, begotten in virtue of her chastity; a pattern which has a dual dimension-moral and spiritual-not collateral, but evolutionary in character.

The terms *viram and maṟam* in Tamil mean heroism or bravery.[57] The term viram and its cognates are used in six places of which three just refer to soldiers. Of the other three instances two refer to Kannaki and one to a Jain saint.[58] Kannaki in these places is described as virapattini (heroic chaste lady), an ideal admired and approved contemporarily and by posterity.[59] The Jain saint is described as a hero who had completely put aside attachment and anger.[60]

The term maram and its cognates occur 21 times in the sense of bravery.[61] Of these only two occurrences refer to individual characters. One refers to Cenkuttuvan meaning that his martial valour is in consonance with his virtuous life. The other reference to Kovalan means compassionate hero.

It follows from these uses of the terms, in addition to our thematic analysis, that the poet Ilango Adigal has depicted a pattern of heroism which is not martial, but moral and ultimately spiritual as applied to Kannaki, the principal character of Cilappatikāram.

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33. This pattern may 'include several other aspects also like, for example, "Humility, Obedience, Faith, Patience, Resistance to temptations, Repentance, Charity and the like". In view of Cilappathikaram's special insistence on certain virtue, only these three aspects are disscussed here.

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49. Ibid., 19 :.61. This may be taken to mean a sort of counselling by her inner Voice i.e., by the unconscious mind and as such, endorses her stand to reclaim the honour of her husband.

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59. Contemporary admiration:- 12: 47-50, 15: 142-144, 21: 49-50, 22: 155. admiration by the posterity: 23:.14, 177; 25 : 114, 129, 169; 26: 253; 27 : 1I9; 28: 210 ; 30 : 150-151.

This very epic is an everlasting symbol of admiration of Kannaki as an ideal of heroism.

60. (a) Cil., 10: 168-169, trans. V. R. R. Dikshitar, op. cit" p. 185.

(b) It is interesting to note that "In a verse quoted by Avatarakavi in his commentary on his own Isvarasataka, a Vira is defined in terms of a saint.

In fact, the saint has been called a Maha-Vira".

-V. Raghavan, The Number of Rasa-s, p. 84.

61. Cenkuttuvan 30 : K 10-11.

Kovalan - 15 : 53.

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(8) FEMALE HEROISM IN EPIC POETRY : EAST AND WEST

This essay aims at juxtaposing the well-known representative epic poems of Europe and Asia with a view to examining the heroic personages in comparison and thereby understanding the respective emphasis on the concept of epic heroism in these diverse cultures. The Time span is upto the Middle Ages and the European Renaissance.

This essay is structured into three sections. The first section adumbrates certain key concepts involved in the discussion such as,

epic hero, plebian heroism, female heroism, martial heroism, intellectual heroism, moral and spiritual heroism.

The second section illustrates with a chart the nature of the heoric personages of the epics under discussion and their heroic patterns. The third section provides a short symoptic account of the two Tamil epics, **Cilappatikāram** and **Manimēkalai** and of their importance in the discussion.

Section I

Epic hero : The chief protagonist of an epic action is called the epic hero in general. His identity as such is determined on the basis of his structural and thematic significance in the action of the epic. This is to say, the epic action should be concerned with the fortunes of the hero. Normally an epic poem will have one hero; but some have several heroes in terms of structure and one in terms of theme, thus having a collective heroship.

Plebian heroism : Most of the epics, at least those of antiquity, have royal personages such as emperors, kings, queens, princes, and princesses as their heroes. But some epics have common persons that is, of non-royal lineage, as their heroes. Such depiction of common persons as heroes is termed as plebian heroism.

Female heroism

"The hero, therefore, is the man or woman" says Joseph Campbell.

(The Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 24). According to R.R. Bolgar, "A woman can be a "hero" in the same sense as s man, and in such cases, "heroine" merely marks the change of gender." "Hero or Anti-Hero" concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. ed. Burns and Reagan, P. 142, n.1.

Martial heroism

A quality of heroic act or acts wherein the chief protagonist relies on and makes use of his martial prowess to get over his predicament is called martial heroism. Such heroism partakes of qualities such as physical fortitude, pride, passions, vengeance, etc. It is amoral.

Intellectual heroism

A pattern of heroic action wherein the chief protagonist uses his powers of intellect to get over his heroic predicament. The end is victory and the means one's powers of the intellect. It is also amoral.

Moral and Spiritual heroism

This is a pattern of heroic action in the performance of which moral considerations and spiritual significance receive greater attention. The protagonists in this pattern do not give exclusive weight to physical prowess or to intellectual eminence. They subordinate these qualities to moral rectitude and spiritual ends so as to ensure human happiness at the initial stage and to attain spiritual bliss as the ultimate goal.

Section II

This section contains two tables, one regarding the World Epics (from 2400 B.C. to 1700 A.D.) and the other regarding the Tamil Epics (from 2nd c. A.D. to 19th c.A.D.) characterising them in terms of the aspects of heroism discussed under section I.

WORLD EPICS

Language	Name of the epic	author	age	Hero	Male Female	Lineage	aspect of Heroism
Babylonian	Gilgamesh	Anonymous	2400 B.C.	Gilgamesh	Male	Royal	Martial
Samskrit	Ramayana	Valmiki	4C-BC	Rama	Male	Prince	Moral
Samskrit	Mahabharata	Vyasa	4C-BC	Pandavas Collective	Male	Princes	Intellectual Moral
Greek	The Iliad	Homer	8C-BC	Achilles	Male	King	Martial
Greek	The Odyssey	Homer-?	6C-BC	Odysseus	Male	King	Intellectual
Latin	The Aeneid	Virgil	1C-BC	Aeneas	Male	Royal	Martial-moral
Tamil	Cilappathikaram	Ilanko	2C - AD	Kannaki	female	Merchant Class	Moral
Tamil	Manimekalai	Sathhanar	3-5C-Ad	Manimekalai	female	Prostitute family	Moral-Spiritual
Persian	Shah nama	Firdawsi	11C-Ad	Shah in shah	Male	Emperor	Martial
German (MHG)	Nibelungenlied	Anonynous	12C-AD	Siegfried	Male	Royal	Martial-revenge
Italian	Jerusalem Delivered	Tasso	16C-AD	Godfrey, et.al Collective	Male	Chieftains	Moral-Spiritual
Portuguese	OS Lusiadas	Camoens	16C-AD	Vasco da Gama	Male	Non-royal	Moral-Spiritual
English	Faerie Queene	Edmund Spenser	16C-AD	Knights Collective	Male female	Princely	Moral-Spiritual
English	Paradise Lost	John Milton	17C-AD	Adam	Male	MAN	Moral-Spiritual

Tamil Epics

S.No.	Name of the Epic	Author	age	Hero
1	Cilappathikaram	Ilanko	2C-AD	Kannaki
2	Manimekalai	Sathanar	3-5C-AD	Manimekalai
3	Perunkathai	Kongu Velir	6-8C-AD	Udayanan
4.	Jeevaka Cinthamani	Thiruthakka Thevar	10C-AD	Jeevakan
5	Kamba Ramayanam	Kamban	10C-Ad	Rama
6	Periya puranam	Sekkilar	12C-AD	Saiva saints Collective
7	Villi Bharatam	Villiputhurar	14C-AD	Pandavas Collective
8	Seera Puranam	Umaru Pulavar	17C-AD	Prophet Muhammad
9	Tempavani	Joseph Beschi	18C-AD	Jesus
10	Iratchanya Yatrikam	Krishna Pillai	19C-AD	Everyman

Section II (a)

Male-female	Lineage	aspect of heroism
female	merchant class	moral
female	prostitute family	moral and spiritual
male	prince	intellectual-moral
male	king	material - moral
male	king	moral
male female	royal merchant class	moral
male	royal	martial-moral
male	emperor	martial-moral
male	non-royal	moral-spiritual
male	MAN	moral-spiritual

Cilappatikāram

The first Tamil epic in thirty cantos by Ilango ,Adigal (2nd c.A.D.). It deals with the story of Kannaki, the heroine. Kovalan the son of a wealthy merchant of Pukar, is married to Kannaki, the daughter of another wealthy merchant of the city. After a few years of blissful married life, Kovalan falls in love with Madhavi, a dancer and lives with her, deserting his wife. He has a daughter by her, Manimekalai by name. On a festival day they both go to the beach and enjoy singing in turns. As misfortune would have it, Kovalan misinterprets her song as though she were in love with someone else and leaves her abruptly for his home. Kannaki who has been stoically bearing his desertion receives him with her usual warmth and offers him a ,pair of anklets thinking that he has come home for want of money. Ashamed of his conduct Kovalan intends to make good his loss by doing some business with the money to be raised by selling the anklets. When he reveals this plan to his wife and leaves for Madurai, Kannaki simply follows him without a murmur.

On reaching Madurai, Kovalan approaches a goldsmith and seeks his help to sell an anklet. The goldsmith who had stolen the queen's anklet, a similar one, sees an opportunity to cover his theft and informs the king of recovery of the queen's anklet from a stranger. The king orders, without proper trial, to kill the thief and bring the anklet to him. On hearing the news Kannaki goes to the court and proves to the king that Kovalan was not the thief but it was the king who has forcibly taken her anklet by killing her husband. Convinced of her proof the king swoons to death. In her fiery frenzy Kannaki burns down the city through the sunclad power of her chastity; leaves the Pandya country; reaches the hilly country of the Chera where she joins her husband, now a celeestial who takes her in a celestial car to heavens.

When informed of this strange phenomenon, Senguttuvan the Chera king decides to raise a temple in Kannaki's honour. He goes on an expedition to the North to bring a stone for her statue from the Himalayas; defeats all opposition on the way; brings the consecrated stone to Vanji, his capital where he installs the statue of Kannaki in a newly built temple and celebrates her deification.

Kannaki the chief protagonist of the epic, being a woman, does not resort to physical fortitude to get over her predicament. She wins her case against the king and burns his city only through the spiritual strength begotten of her moral rectitude namely, chastity. By depicting Senguttuvan's feats of warrior heroism as just a means of celebrating Kannaki's moral and spiritual victory, the poet reveals his attitude that martial valour is desirable only if it is employed to serve and uphold moral and spiritual principles. By depicting the goldsmith as a dishonest culprit and by the attributes such as "messenger of Death", "murderous goldsmith", treacherous person ", and so on, the poet discredits his intellectual abilities manifest in his seizing of the opportunity to cover his theft, in his exhaustive knowledge of thievery and in his persuasive powers of rhetoric.

Portrayal of a woman as the "hero" in terms of her moral and spiritual excellence, and depiction of the most powerful monarch as a royal servant of the" hero", illustrate the fact that the very first Tamil epic Cilappathikaram has chosen to celebrate moral and spiritual heroism, an interesting contrast to the earliest epics in the European tradition.

Manimekalai

The second Tamil epic in thirty cantos by Seethalaichattanar (circa. 3rd or fth c. A.D.), deals with the story of Manimekalai, the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi. Manimekalai becomes a Buddhist nun at the instance of her mother. The death of her father and the misfortunes of Kannaki had disillusioned her view of Life. Attracted by her beauty and other accomplishments, Udayakumaran, the prince develops a passion for her and one day follows her to a garden. Manimekalai escapes into a marble room wherefrom the goddess Manimekalai after whom she was named, spirits her away and leaves her on an island called Manipallavam after investing her with certain magical powers. There in Manipallavam she receives a divine bowl which, if first filled with food by a chaste lady would never become empty, no matter how many millions are fed with it and how long. Back in her town, Manimekalai gets the bowl filled with by Athirai, a chaste lady and goes on feeding the poor; the handicapped and the needy. Seeking permission from the king, she visits the prison and

feeds the criminals. Thus her name spreads far and wide as one who brings food and succour to one and all.

When again pursued by the lascivious prince, Manimekalai assumes the shape of Kayachandikai a wellknown woman of the day, whose ..husband chancing to see the prince pursuing his wife at night, kills him. 'Manimekalai feels sorry for the death of the prince. Her knowledge of her relationship with the prince as her husband in previous births makes her bemoan his illaudable death. Thus there is a struggle within and without her, between her passion for the prince and her spiritual leanings.. By the timely counsel from her guardian angel, Manimekalai successfully resists this temptation from within. The queen-mother tries to avenge her son's death caused by Manimekalai by getting her shut up in a cell and setting on a ruffian to molest her. Manimekalai overcomes all such persecutions by virtue of magical powers attained through her guardian angel. At last the queen begs her pardon for her illtreatment and sets her free. Manimekalai thereafter goes about learning the philosophy of various religions. She hurries to Kanchi to feed the famine-stricken people and there meets her mother Madhavi and Aravana Adigal, the Celebrated Buddhist saint who teaches her the Buddhist philosophy. Initiated by him, Manimekalai starts performing tapas (penance) to avoid future births.

Like its predecessor, Manimekalai also has no hero; only heroine. The epic demonstrates that sainthood is the ideal form of the heroic provided it serves humanity in its concrete form. While Cilappathikāram glorifies the virtue of chastity M animekalai heroizes the virtue of charity both at moral and spiritual levels.

Conclusion

The descriptive definitions of the aspects of epic Heroism provided in section I, applied to the charts in Section II, and illustrated by Section III, guide us to conclude that of all the epics of the East and West, only the earliest Tamil epics, Cilappatikāram and Manimekalai have employed the theme of Female Heroism, glorifying the aspects of moral and spiritual heroism.

References

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2. R.R. Bolgar, "Hero or Anti-Hero", concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, p. 142, n.1

(9) A POET'S SOUL IN A STATESMAN'S GARB

Tamil Renaissance

Revivification and reaffirmation of the past is one of the characteristics of a cultural Renaissance. The Tamil Renaissance as a regional" aspect of the Pan-Indian resurgence during the latter half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries expressed itself in many ways of cherishing the past. One of the such expressions was retelling the Tamil classics in modern idiom, whether verse or prose. This spirit of revivifying the Tamil classics was informed by two contemporary social and cultural tendencies; the social tendency infused the ardour of political freedom against the colonial suppression, while the cultural awakening fed by a spirit of injured nationality encouraged a spirit of self-assertion. If the former ardour saw the emergence of poets like Subramania Bharati, the latter spirit was enlivened by poets like Bharatidasan. The fact that Subramania Bharati chose to retell the story of an episode in the Mahabharata and rejuvenate portions of Srimad Bhagavatha, while Bharatidasan chose to revivify the story of Cilapppatikaram and romantically reconstruct some of the ancient Tamil themes reveals to us their respective viewpoints and affiliation.

Kalaignar's unique role

It is more or less in such a political and cultural ambience that Thiru Mu. Karunanidhi popularly known as Kalaignar Karunanidhi [03.06.1924 -] came upon the scene of Tamil Renainssance at its acme. Kalaignar Karunanidhi uniquely endowed with these dual affiliations namely the spirit of proletarian democracy and that of his own cultural identity has been innately blessed with the spirit of creativity in the realm of Literature. Though one could find one or two personalities sharing the social and cultural spirit of his age, he has no rivals in the field of creative writing with the result he has been historically destined to become the beacon light for the masses with all the three essential aspects of the contemporary Tamil society.

There had been liberals but they lacked the cultural identity and literary

talents; there had been stalwarts who spearheaded the cultural renaissance but they lacked either the spirit of prolitarian democracy or the poetic gift; there had been better poets but they lacked the other two essential factors without which their poetry sounded inane and empty.

He is a statesman but with a bias to his nationality and to his art; he is a symbol of the Tamil spirit that emerged as a result of the cultural renaissance but he has outgrown its limits by cherishing the democratic ideals, the global order of his age; he is a man of art and letters but with committed ideologies to spread. It is such a rare combination of these three diverse talents 'even as the Tamil has three fold inherent aspects of expression that has chiselled Kalaignar a unique leader of the Tamils, set apart.

Some international parallels : Senghor and Kalaignar

As a crative artist he has been prolifc : he has written many novels; composed hundreds of poems, light and large, written several dramas, social and historical; tried his hand very successfully at screen plays, story and dialogue; and interpreted many an ancient Tamil work like the Kural in lucid modem Tamil prose. Such a literary feat is rarely seen with modem men of national destinies. Leopold Sedar Senghor, former president of Senegal is a good parallel in comparison, an equally prolific statesman-writer though more renowned in the West.

President Senghor's poetic commitment to emphasize the speciality, if not superiority of the Black Africa through his concept of Negritude finds a happy parallel in Kalaignar's literary commitment to emphasize the superiority of the Tamils. The latter's less renown in the west is due to the regional medium he chose to write and more than this, an absence of social and political role beyond his nationality.

Whitman and Kalaignar

President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 4th, 1865 when the civil war was nearing its end. Stung by the death, Walt Whitman [1819-1892] composed in 1865 an elegy **"When Lilacs last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"** to mourn his untimely demise. It seems that there was a prophetic suggestion in the life of president Lincoln about his immanent end which the poet suggests through the image of the westem star, a

symbol of Lincoln [line 7]. Whitman laments over his own inability to read the situation and understand its omnious significance:

O Westem orb sailing the heaven
Now I know what you must have meant
as a month since I walk'd,
As I walk'd in silence the transparent
Shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell
as you bent to me night after night
As you drop'd from the sky low down
as if to my side ...
As I stood on the rising ground in the
breeze in the cool transparent night
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost
in the natherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied
sank as where you sad orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.[1]

The adage, 'Great men think alike' holds good for poets also. For, Kalaignar's poetic fancy has expressed in more or less the same vein his anguish over the demise in 1969 of CN. Annadurai, the architect of the DMK and then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. In a very moving requiem "Idhayatthai thanthidu Anna"[2] he eulogizes the sterling qualities of Annadurai both as an affectionate elder brother and as an illustrious leader of the masses. Like Whitman he laments over his inability to read the prophetic message of Annadurai gesture in the form of a statue erected in Madras before his death:

When a statue was erected
For the elder brother in Madras ...

He stood showing his index finger;

We thought our brother was ordering!

Alas!

Only today we understand

He meant to live for one year only!

[When we erected a statue in Madras for our dear Anna, in a posture of pointing his index finger alone, we thought that he was directing us towards a better destination, but, alas, only now are we able to grasp the significance of the gesture that he had got only one more year to reach his destination].

It is interesting to note that the situation, the dignitaries and the poetic intuition that constitute these two poems are surprisingly similar. Moreover, there seems to be a temporal assonance also: Lincoln's tragedy and Anna's untimely demise occurred in the 60s of the 19th and 20th centuries respectively; both the contemporary poets who have eulogized them in their songs were in their forties [Whitman 46, Kalaiggnar 45] at that time and both the poets have chosen to celebrate them in their verses not because of the lost patronage of any kind, but because of the loss of the individual to the social amelioration.

If Whitman was the poet of Democracy par excellence in the U.S.A., Kalaignar is the poet of proletarian democracy without compromising his cultural and national identity in India. These similarities also reveal a distinction between them that while Whitman remained a Poet throughout his life, the poet in Kalaignar was fortunate enough to become the head of a state so that his poetic vision - some of them at least - could be translated into reality. It is difficult to decide at least for the present writer, whether the poet or the statesman in Karunanidhi that is superior to the other even though the title Kalaignar might provide some clue to this question.

Poompukar

It is such committed literary talents that Kalaignar Karunanidhi brings to his multipurpose attempt of dramatizing the story of Cilapppathikaram in the early sixties. Of the several ancient Tamil works that had their

renaissance in the 20th century, Cilappathikāram ranks first more in its cultural appeal than in the literary. Similarly even though there have been several attempts[3] at dramatizing the epic of Kannaki, it is only the dramatic version of Kalaignar Karunanidhi that has the advantage of being read and staged or even filmed.

Transcreation

Retelling or recreating of an ancient work of greater repute is as old as the Roman empire in the west when they translated the ancient Greek masterpieces into Latin. Such modified versions of earlier works are considered of late as the critical revaluation by poets of the respective ages. The literary core that allows itself of such revaluations are invariabbly the underlying myths of the works concerned. It is these myths that are being given a new lease of life in such retelling or adaptations. Revival of myths may have two aims:

1. retelling of the myth in a modern idiom while reta ining the myth as it was.

2. reviving the myth in terms of modern idiom with certain metamorphosis of the myth itself, which is better called transcreation, Kalaignar Karunanidhi's version of Cilappathikaram belongs to the second category transforming the idiom as well as the myth by transfusing in it the ideological ambitions of his age as noted earlier at the beginning of this paper.

Deviations

While effecting such dual transformation, Kalaignar has deviated from the original in many a way. Deviations from the original are in general resorted.to for the following reasons:

1. to enchance the aesthetic effect, if the original lacks it.
2. to maintain poetic justice where the original one does not suit the age of revival.
3. to suit the cultural climate of the age of revival.
4. to interpret the myth in terms of the social aspirations of the age of revival.

A retelling or adaptation of a classic may have one or more of . these reasons for its deviation. The deviation to enhance the aesthetic effect of the original is rarely found unless in relation to works whose artistic excellence falls short of the myth it embodies. The cycle of Iliad in Greek is a case in point. The myth of Adam and Eve is another good example of successive renaissance in the entire culture of Europe. John Dryden's version of Shakespeare's **Antony and Cleopatra** as **All for love** is an example aimed at a better poetic justice. Kamban's version of the **Ramayana** and Pulavar Kulandai's version of the same as **Ravana Kaviyam** are examples of retelling the myth of the **Ramayana** in terms of the poets' cultural climates. The dramatic interpretation of Shakespeare's **The Tempest** in Soviet Union and Kalaignar's dramatic version of CILAPPATHIKĀRAM as **Poompukar** are examples of earlier classics being transfused with contemporary social aspirations of the age and social commitments of the artists.

The alternations by Kalaignar seem to have been in three aspects :

1. changes in the very basic aims of the epic.
2. changes in relation to the characters of the epic, and
3. changes by way of deletion and inclusion of certain actions of the epic.

The exordium of Cilapathikāram records the following as the aims of the epic:

1. Dharma will become the God of Death to kings who swerve from the path of righteousness.

2. It is natural for great men to adore a chaste lady of great fame.

3. Destiny will manifest itself and be fulfilled. These truths centre round the poem Cilapathikaram.[4]

In his version, **Poompukar**, Kalaignar alters all these three aims.

He shows that the Pandiya king is punished not by Dharma, but by people, the Public justice. Kannaki says to the Pandiya king:

> I have come to this court with a case against you. The noble Elders who have formed the Assembly here they shall be judges now and let them give the correct verdict.[5]

Kalaignar Karunanidhi takes away the authority of judgement from **dharma** and from the king and passes it on to the people. This is a deviation of seminal importance to the age and nationality to which he belongs. At one stroke; he dismisses the non-corporel authority namely dhar'ma on the one hand, and relegates the monarchic attribute of the justice to the background, on the other, without, of course, endangering the concept of justice in the case of Kannaki. Dismissal of **dharma** as an authority of justice is influenced by the rationalistic ideals of the party he is wedded to. And this void has been filled up by an authority, viz., the people, an entirely 20th century ideal at least as far as India is concerned. And this has been historically upheld. Let us elucidate this a little more:

A Caṅkam poet wrote that the life of the society is neither food nor water, but the king. That is to say, the king is the life of the body of the society.[6] The people - the society - are immobile without the pleasure or the king. This was roughly 2,000 years ago when the system of absolute monarchy was at its height. Kamban, the monarch of the poets was able to the progressive aspect of social authority through the ages and therefore in spite of being a poet of the medieval [feudal] India, he changed the Caṅkam formula and said that the king was a body wherein resided the life of the people. This reversal of organic role in an age quite unripe for the dictum was a bold attempt in the conception of an ideal society by Kamban. This was roughly 1,000 years after the Cankam ideal. Poet Subramania Bharati revolutionized this concept further, when he said that all of us are kings of this land. It is not just that everyone has become the king or that the people are invested with this authority of ruling. But he has exploded the concept of duality, i.e. the concept of body and soul and their changing roles - and instead advocated for a collective role in the realm of authority and justice. This was just 60 years ago.

As a fruitful legacy, our Kalaignar has inherited this principle of justice and transferred the same into to a myth which belonged to the Caṅkam Age of the Tamils. Anachronistic it might sound, but as a dramatist and poet, he has the sanction of international aesthetics in this regard.

The second important deviation by Kalaignar is the bold stroke by which poet Ilango, the author of the epic has been introduced as a character in the narration. Not only that, the revolutionary aspect of this alteration lies in fact that the same Ilango, historically belonging to the Jain school of Philosophy has been made to categorically denounce faith in astrology and destiny - a cardinal principle on which the original epic revolves. Though it is true that the original epic itself records the falsification of the royal astrology's prophecy by the prince's renunciation, the epic poet does not denounce the authority of destiny but rather structurally weaves its inscrutable and inevitable role in the life of human being. Kalaignar's Ilango declares:

Neduncheraladhan : ... who can defy Destiny Ilango? Our astrologer's prediction is bound to come true.

Ilango : That might be for those with ears of superstition but not for me .... The forecast is bound to fail and I accept the challenge of the so-called Fate which has got to turn tail when confronted with determined endavour?[7]

If we are content to put our faith in Fate, then, Tamilnadu would soon tum into a dungen of despair. I am here to defy Fate and I shall do so till my last breath.[8]

The third alteration is that Kalaignar's Kannaki remains a human being throughout. He does not deify her in recognition of her virtue, as the original epic has done. This is not just an alteration but one of far reaching influence in the sense that it opposes and rejects the cultural ideals imported and infused into the culture of the ancient Tamils by the early Aryan settlers in the South, as maintained by Periyar E.V. Ramasamy under whose influence was spent the formative period of Kalaignar's adulthood.[9] It is not a simple rejection. While the Nation was politically endeavouring to throw off the yoke of British imperialism in India, the party under Periyar was spearheading a socio-cultural movement intended to cleanse the Tamil rationality of the cultural aspects allegedly Aryan in character. This minor circle of cultural resurgence" become more and more pronounced when the foreign rule was politically terminated in 1947, and as a result,

Tamilnadu gradually came under this self-purification spell of which Kalaignar has been one of the chief architects. Hence this alteration and its welcome reception by the people.

Consequent upon this avowed principle of Tamil nationality conceptually held to be pure from any condemnable blemishes, Kalaignar has made some other alterations also. For example, he introduces a new character, a Greek merchant who is portrayed as instrumental for Kovalan's action of leaving his wife for Madhavi's mansion. It is simply to relieve Madhavi from the clutches of the Greek merchant and thus save the name of Tamilnad that Kovalan is shown as buying the garland for a very dear price. As Arignar Anna, the finest flower of the Renaissance of the Tamil nationality in the middle decades of this country says,

Kovalan had to defend the fair name of Tamilnad and the fairest damsel from falling to the grip of an oldman from Greece.[10]

It is with the selfsame motive of saving the name of Tamilnad and the prestige of the impeccable Tamil race and its literature that Kalaignar divests the original epic of expressions, characters and events that smack of superstition, sensuality and other unethical attributes. Kalaignar Karunanidhi has adamantine faith in the basic goodness, rectitude and rational views of the Tamil people. He is emphatic that a Tamilian would not subdue or suppress anyone nor would he allow his self to be subdued or suppressed by anyone.[11] It is not just a jingoistic slogan with him,.but an abiding faith with which he lives and the faith lives in his evergreen and vibrant spirit. In other words, his sincerity in this regard is absolute and unquestionable. And that is the key of his success both as a poet and a statesman.

The democrat in Karunanidhi has influenced another deviation, proletarian in character. Though Cilappathikaram is an epic sans a villain, the crime of unrighteous death of Kovalan is generally attributed to the Royal goldsmith. The original epic has ample evidence to this effect. But Kalaignar Karunanidhi could not brook such malicious attribute to be perpetuated with a particular community. He depicts therefore an officer of the Royal household of the Pandiya King as the real culprit. "As a firm believer, in the maintenance of concord hetween various communities,"[12]

Karunanidhi has erased this blot "to bring the story into pace with the times."[13]

The Poet and the Statesman

Thus when we look at the literary contributions of Kalaignar Karunanidhi in a total perspective, we could perceive the benign confluence of two highly influential phases of his personality: the overflowing enthusiasm for anything that is Tamil and the Tamilian on the one hand, and the unquenchable thirst to drink in and dry up the tears of the have-nots on the other.

In such a humanitarian task, the statesman in Karunanidhi conntributes the thought which the artist, in our Kalaignar immortalizes in enduring fragrance of inimitable poetry.

Though it is true that any worthwhile estimate of contemporary contributions ultimately rests with the posterity, we can in all fairness observe that the following encomium paid to Oliver Goldsmith by the great literary scholar Dr. Samuel Johnson, holds good to Kalaignar Karunanidhi also:

> he left scarcely any kind of writing untouched,
>
> and touched nothing that he did not adorn.[14]

For, whether it is poetry, drama, dialogue, novel, or even political speeches, the stamp of Karunanidhi is always unmistakable and almost inimitable.

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3. a. Tamiloli, **Vithiyaa Vinaiya?** [Poetic drama].

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f. Pulavar Arasu, **Kudamalaitheivam.**

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i. G.C. Ilankovan, **Ilankovin Kathali.**

j. M.U. Aravinthan, **Cilampuc Celvi.**

4. VR. Ramachandra Dikshitar, trans. Cilappathikaram [Madras: Kazhakam, 1978], p. 87.

5. T.G. Narayanaswamy, trans., **The Tale Of The Anklet**, p. 72.

6. **Purananuru**, 186. 1-2

7. **Tale of the Anklet**, p. 4.

8. ibid., p. 6.

9. The other alterations such as deleting the first canto and entirely assigning a different cause for the burning of the city of Madurai, etc., are also made from the same point of view.

10. **Tale of the Anklet**, p. IV.

11. **Medaiyil Viciya Melliya Punkarru**, p. 47.

12. Arignar Anna, **Tale of the Anklet**, p. IV.

13. Ibid., p. XIII.

14. W.H. Hudson, **An Outline History Of English Literature**, p.142.

(10) HUMAN PREDICAMENT IN THE EPICS OF VIRGIL AND KAMBAN

Introduction

Virgil (70-19B.C.) is the first greatest Roman poet and his epic the **Aeneid** is the first secondary epic in European literary tradition. Kamban of the ninth or tenth century A.D. is one of the greatest of epic poets in Tamil literary tradition and his epic Iramavatar is also a secondary epic. Though Kamban is said to have named his work as Iramavatar, his epic is generally known as **Kambaramayanam** which speaks volumes for his fame as an epic poet.

Though technically derivative and secondary the **Aeneid** is not derivative either in theme or in subject matter. It is entirely Virgil's own work composed to create a model, an ideal hero quite different from the Greek heroes celebrated in the epics of Homer and as such, Virgil became the trend setter and remains so in the epic tradition of the European languages, John Milton, the English poet (1608-1674 A.D) being his worthy follower and his only worthy rival.

Kamban is not a trend setter in the sense Virgil is. Kamban's influence has been nonetheless inescapable on almost all the epic poets in Tamil who followed him in terms of idealisation of a world view, imagination par excellence, super characterisation, bewitching style of sweet poetry and numerous innovated metrical cadences wonderfully embracing the emotions described. Readers and critics of successive generations have been so charmed by his poetic beauty that he is the most discussed and admired poet in Tamil next, of course, only to Tiruvalluvar, the author of the Kural.

Theme of the Aeneid

To facilitate easy reception of the comparison attempted in this article, a short synoptic account of the theme of the **Aeneid** is furnished below:

The **Aeneid** an epic poem in XII books describes the adventures of

Aeneas, the hero, the son-in-law of the Trojan King Priam. Book I describes the great storm which brings Aeneas and his followers to the coast of Carthage ruled by Dido, the queen. Aeneas narrates to the queen the fall of Troy and his wanderings from Troy to Sicily in Books II and III. Book IV describes the tragic love of Dido and Aeneas who in submission to the will of Jupiter sails on, leaving the heart-broken queen to kill herself. Books V and VI describe Aeneas' journey into the underworld where he meets his father Anchises among the blessed and receives the great revelation of the future of Rome according to the divine plan. At the end of this book Aeneas emerges as a renewed soul finding justification for all his sufferings and burdens-he loses his old father and the only son on the way, is forced to desert Dido whom he really loved and, is destined to found a new seat of kingdom in the midst of opposition by the natives. Book VII deals with the arrival of the Trojan fleet on the Italian shores and the Italian people's preparation for war. In Book VIII Aeneas sails up the river Tiber to the future site of Rome. The last four Books are devoted to the wars between the Trojans and the Latins. At the end the natives lose the war with the death of their leader Turnus while Aeneas emerges victorious and marries Lavinia the daughter of the native king.

The mission of Aeneas to found Rome, the greatest city of Ancient times is not essentially based on mere force, or even on intellectual superiority, but rather on **pietas**, a desire to fulfil one's duty. Though he too travels the seas like Odysseus and endures many hardships he ultimately lands in Italy not as an invader or as an avenger, but as a suppliant, petitioning for a vacant site to found the city that he has been commissioned to establish. He does not enter the war for any personal motive as in the Iliad. But through a desire to fulfil his mission in life, his destiny for a public cause ordained by the gods themselves. His righteous indignation and fiery valour enable him to defeat the opposing forces, but he does not represent the barbaric energy of the Homeric warriors. This quality has been transferred to Turnus and his forces of opposition. Aeneas accepts war as a necessary evil, an instrument of his ultimate purpose, but in spite of the slaughter of his dearest friend Pallas, he decides the final issue in a personal duel with Turnus, thus avoiding random fighting and needless killing. His ultimate purpose is building, not destroying, the eternal city. It seems clear then that Virgil rejects the

Homeric concept of might and physical prowess as an aspect of the heroic ideal, and presents instead the concept of **pietas** as the ideal of heroism.

Probable areas of comparison

The significance of Virgil's worldview can be understood only with reference to his literary tradition cheifly that of Greek epics. His epic in fact is a commentary on the epics of Homer. Kamban's significance is similarly to be understood with reference to the worldviews represented in the Tamil epic tradition which he inherited. Whereas Virgil emphasizes the heroic in terms of national honour rather than personal honour celebrated in the Homeric epics, Kam ban seeks to emphasize the heroic ideal in terms of universal brotherhood cutting across all races and cultures, in terms of submitting oneself to an order of universal application and in terms of personal virtues such as filial affection, constancy in man and wife relationship and spontaneous condescension for the oppressed and suppressed. Apart from such idealized vision of human life, both Virgil and Kamban have been greatest artists, taking their respective poetic arts to new heights of excellence in respect of imagination, characterization and style. Thus these two great poets have several comparable aspects of epic poetry, similar and distinct, the salient of which can be listed as under:

1. Both are scholarly poets producing secondary epic.

2. As poets of vision both have attempted to create an ideal hero, an ideal ruler.

3. The world view or the philosophy of life portrayed by them is more or less similar, showing the predicament of man either subjected to the macrocosmic order or dictated by the given situation.

4. The heroes of both the epics are exiles, rather exiled: One is destined to establish a better world order, in quest of some designated ideal place; the other to retrieve the lost one, to set the disordered world into order.

5. Whereas the Virgilian hero rarely decides on his own being always at the mercy of the celestial order, Kamban's hero grows out of his boyish submission to higher orders, human or otherwise, and matures enough in

the course of his life to take his own decisions.

6. Both the heroes are constrained to do certain things which they themselves would not approve of in other circumstances or in others.

7. As poets of consummate artistic skills, both the poets have used almost all the epic formulas such as the journey theme either into the green woods or the nether world, disguise, dreams, guest, war and so on, except the technique of in medias res which is employed only by Virgil, in keeping with his tradition.

8. Both attempt innovations: Virgil freely; Kamban to certain extent relating to certain themes and techniques.

9. Superb characterization using arresting imagination and appropriate Imagery.

10. Virgil remains the European model. Kamban a Tamil model to certain extent in lively characterization, dramatizing the events 'with beautiful pen pictures and superb versification.

Aeneas and Rama in critical situations

Of the several comparable aspects as above, we shall take one (point six) whereby these two masters of epic vision invite our attention to certain human situations in which even the almost near perfect heroes have to act not only against the ideal world order which they avow to establish but also against their own will and volition- a human predicament inescapable even for them. The killing of Turnus by Aeneas and the killing of Vali by Rama may be compared in this light.

Virgil presents in Aeneas 'a hero whose most signal quality is pietas, the quality designated for Aeneas in the prologue. The Roman word as an adjective (pius) and noun (pietas) describes the right relationship that exists between a human being and (a) the gods, (b) his public responsibilities as a citizen or a ruler (c) his family and (d) other human beings. Thus the word stands for a cluster of semantic designations and Aeneas the hero is portrayed as the embodiment of the term pietas.

The epic describes him as a passive dutiful servant of the gods under whose commands he has undertaken his prime mission of founding a new empire, as a self denying public servant; as the most.famous

example of filial devotion; and as a man with genial disposition towards his fellowmen, even towards his enemies as could be seen when he grants a truce to the clashing forces when they wish for it :

Peace for the dead and slain in war you ask

I'd grant it gladly to the living too. (Aeneid XI, 110-111)

Such a humane person who had experienced or witnessed the barbarous killing of suppliant warriors or even boys in the Trojan war, acts very differently with Turnus his rival and the anti-hero of the epic. Turnus the Italian leader opposes, Aeneas efforts of acquiring a meagre settlement on the Italian shores which the native king is all glad to offer to Aeneas. A peace treaty entered into between Aeneas and the natives is unilaterally broken by Turnus who is portrayed as a person of unmerited pride, vengeance and wrath. The poet characterizes his temperament as furor impius (unrighteous anger). If Aeneas' has to fulfil his mission of founding a new empire as directed by gods for the sake of which he has to leave his beloved Troy, lose his wife, child and father on his way, he has no other alternative than to defeat Turnus and win the war. His love of human beings in generaly is so natural that he proposes a duel with Turnus to avoid unnecessary bloodshed to decide the issue. Turnus agrees to the proposal but after a few rounds of personal combat Turnus falters and Aeneas raises his sword to finish him. Terribly afraid to look at the furiuos face of Aeneas, Turnus accepts defeat, concedes Lavinia and begs for mercy. Hesitating for a few moments, Aeneas thrusts his sword, with an unusual angry gesture, into the heart of Turnus and kills him.

There have been a lot of controversy over Aeneas' killing of Turnus when the latter in pleading for life, giving up all his opposition. The question remains: is the killing of Turnus and calling the Trojan hero as pius Aeneas justifiable at once? Can his heart harbour such an impious anger and intemperate vengeance? Is it in keeping with his personality being built up through out the epic as an enduring hero? Achilles did the same thing to the boyish son of Priam in the Trojan war. Turnus did the same thing to Pallas the boyish friend of Aeneas. How is then Aeneas better than those discredited heroes?

There are umpteen questions like these which call for a justifiable

answer. The fact that Aeneas hesitates for a few moments before plunging his sword into the heart of Turnus reveals-the human dilemma, a psychic tension. He has already been in such a situation when he deserted queen Dido whom he loved so dearly. Subordinating his personal passion to the divine mission for which gods have chosen him, Aeneas leaves carthage resulting in the suicidal death of Dido. Similarly suppressing his personal trait of being merciful by nature even to enemies, and knowing well that Turnus would not keep his word of compromise if allowed to live, Aeneas is left with no other alternative than to resort to an inhuman act of killing the last impediment to accomplish the god's mission. This is quite in keeping with the Virgilian notion of heroism whereby the personal honour is sacrificed to uphold a public cause. The microcosmic interests are subordinated to those of the macrocosmic design.

This is a grave human predicament to be a tool in the hands of some superior power, a candle designed to be destroyed for the welfare of others! The irony of the human situation is that the very gods who instigated the war between Aeneas and the natives get reconciled towards the end of the epic, whereas the human rivals are not allowed by them to get reconciled.

Has Aeneas really won the war or lost it? The pius Aeneas remains so in his relationship with the gods, but fails to the pius with human beings - a tragic hero indeed. What about the poet's attitude towards his hero's final action? The last lines full of pregnant images describe not the winner hero, but the uncontrollable and uncouth anger of the killer hero. The poet is not ambivalent or ambiguous as some critics world like to see him, but he is just mute without any comment. The Augustan idealist in him may celebrate the hero, but Virgil the man is speechless, lost in anguish over the human predicament.

This ironical situation reminds us to a similar situation in the Ramayana also. In accordance with the provisions of the league formed with Sugriva, Rama should kill Vali and in return of the favour Sugriva should send his army in search of Sita and assist Rama in his efforts to redeem her from Ravana. Rama is forewarned that in view of the boon that anyone who opposes Vali shall lose half of his strength to him and therefore Vali is quite invincible if fought in person. So Rama suggests a strategy that

Sugriva shall challenge Vali for a single combat and while they are engaged in the battle Rama would shoot his arrow unseen from behind a shelter. Accordingly Rama shoots a mortal arrow into the chest of Vali and strikes him down. Bewildered by the attack from an unseen person, Vali plucks off the arrow from out of his chest and finds the name of Rama inscribed on it.

Astonished at the unseemly behaviour of Rama who now stands before Vali, Vali "asks him: "Why did you shoot at me when there was no reason for enmity between us? Is this your way of protecting Dharma to attack some one without any provocation?" Rama answers Vali that it has been his avowed principle to protect the wronged and the oppressed and as such, being the usurper of Sugriva's wife with unmerited persecution Vali deserves to be killed. To Vali' s rejoinder that it is no crime in the tradition of monkey race to take forcefully other's wife and thus no violation of Dharma is committed, Rama tells him that Vali is well versed in all the principles of Dharma relating to man, woman and king and therefore he could not be considered as a beast, since Dharma is not concerned with the physical frame but with the mind and soul that resides in the body of any species and therefore Vali deserves the punishment.

Convinced of the line of argument of Rama, Vali poses a crucial question to him: "let it be so, but why should you attack me from behind a shelter? Does it behove a famous warrior like you to behave like this?" Kamban's Rama does not answer Vali. Perhaps he has no answer. Kamban makes Lakshmana answer Vali thus: "Sugriva surrendered first to Rama for help and it is Rama's principle to protect the surrendered whoever he may be and against whomsoever it may be. Rama has thus already promised to help Sugriva. Now if Rama appears before you in person you would surrender too to save yourself whereby Rama's earlier promise would be set at nought. Hence Rama's action."

Kamban portrays Vali as one who never descends to a level of in dignity even in terms of thought; as one who never contemplates that is infra dig. A great warrior, a terror even to the great Ravana, Vali commits the crime of usurping the wife of his brother through force and that of trying to kill him for no offence by Sugriva. Kamban seems to have felt that action against Vali is justifiable, save the way in which Rama kills

him and hence he portrays Rama as keeping silent to Vali's charge of violation of the heroic code of Dharma.

Both Aeneas and Rama are shown to have been subjected to a critical situation wherein they are constrained to violate the principles of their own chosen code of ethics. It is with a view to achieving their ends imposed upon them by powers beyond their control that these two ideal heroes are portrayed as victims of the human predicament where in man is subjected to do something against his own conscience. Both the European tradition represented by Virgil and the Tamil tradition represented by Kamban do not approve of the action of their heroes, eventhough their sympathy lies with them: a tension in our human life between the ideal and the pragmatic.

Have we not, each one of us, anywhere during the labyrinthine course of our lives, experienced such a dilemma, been in such a predicament and acted against our own will and conscience?

(11) TAMIL BHAKTI LITERATURE : ITS SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Bhakti Movement in Tamilnadu

Bhakti Literature is an interesting phenomenon in India and a unique genre in Tamil literature. There are several (special) aspects about it. It is political, social, religious and literary all at once. As such, it is the product of a great Movement that swept the entire region of Tamilnadu during the period between the sixth and the ninth centuries A.D. Though it is primarily a political and religious movement, the nature of its origin, development, sustenance and modus operandi could be understood today only from the body of literature that was produced during the period, since the political history of this period is not distinct and therefore not very helpful. The historians, political and social, have therefore reconstructed the course of history as well as the Movement mostly on the basis of the literature of the period, supported, of course, by the epigraphical evidences wherever available.

The contemporary society or scholarship did not call the body of literature as Bhakti literature or the movement that caused it as Bhakti Movement. It was only during the period of the later Cholas it came to be christened as Bhakti literature and much later that the Movement was identified as Bhakti Movement.

The term Bhakti literature refers in Tamil to a body of devotional hymns sung by the Saiva saints called Nayanmars and the Vaishnava saints called Alvars during the Pallava period. The Vaishnava poems were collected from several shrines of Vaishnava worship during the tenth century A.D. by one Nathamuni and the collection was called Nalayira Divya Prapantham (Holy Book of FourThousand Hymns). The Saiva poems were collected a little later, according to the tradition, during the reign of the Chola emperor Raja Raja the Great by one Nambiandar Nambi and the collection was called Tevaram and Tiruvachakam. Both these collections are collectively known as Bhakti literature.

Though by its nomenclature Bhakti literature means poetry caused by or dealing with a human emotion called Bhakti, it does not simply designate

any poem that sings the praise of or that is addressed to a God or the Lord Supreme of one's following. For example, the excellent devotional epics and poems of the later medieval poets such as Sekkilar, Arunagirinathar, Pillaipperumal Ayyangar, Kumaraguruparar, Shivaprakasa Swamigal and others are not called Bhakti literature; they are termed as Bhakti Patalkal (devotional poetry) or Arutpatalkal(poems of grace). That is, these later poems are never known collectively as in the case of Tevaram or Divya Prapandham. This distinction is maintained in that there are certain characteristics which designate this body of poems as Bhakti literature, a class by itself in Tamil. Some of the chief characteristics are:

1. It is, at least most part of it, occasional in composition, the occasions being more or less similar.

2. It has a definite end in view which is more socio-political than literary.

3. It has a distinct and uniform structure, though the anthologists have classified them differently in terms of their religious principles or priorities.

4. It is choric in character and hence most of this body of poetry is sung attuned to patterns of popular music.

5. It is historical in that the period and the places of composition have imposed temporal and spatial dimensions on these poems. That is to say it is a Movement Literature.

6. In view of the successive ideologies that governed the movement, the earlier compositions are protestant in tone and hence socio-political in aim whereas the later compositions are more spiritual and persuasive towards psychic participation in the blissful experience.

As such, this kind of literature does not repeat and therefore subsequent compositions though devotional in subject matter do not qualify to be called as Movement literature. Since the present Kerala region was politically and socially part and parcel of Tamilnadu during the period of Bhakti Movement i.e. between the sixth and ninth centuries and since Kulasekara Alvar and Cheraman Perumal Nayanar the Chera princes of this period were participants of this great movement, a separate treatment for Kerala region in this respect is not warranted.

Political aspect of the Bhakti Movement

The age of ethical literature which immediately followed the classical Sangam Age of the Tamils has been one of compromising with the realities of life, an age of resignation to what is destined for an individual and for that matter for society, as the norms of life. When we move on to the age of Bhakti literature the world view has already changed. The spirit of resignation gave way to a spirit of protest, to a spirit of rising against the so-called norms of life. The post-Sangam period stretching roughly from 250 to 575A.D. is said to have been one of alien invasion over the ancient society of the Tamils by a group of raiders called the Kalabhras. These Kalabhras secured the seat of the Pandyas in the South and their rule for about 300 years has been one of suppression and subversion of all the norms and values of the ancient Tamils. These alien rulers were against the Tamil concepts of literature chiefly Akam form of poetry and arts like music and drama and the religious beliefs of the Tamils. They supported instead the use of Sanskritised form of a language and religions like Jainism and Buddhism which derided in general the virtues of domestic life and propagated life-negation and asceticism.

It is against such non-Tamil sensibilities forced down the throats of the Tamils by the Jains and at their instance even the rulers, that the Bhakti Movement raised its head and through its relentless struggles for about 200 years overthrew the Kalabhra rule and its impact on Tamilnadu in initial stages and relieved the subsequent rulers from the tyranny of the rich and the high class and made them dependent on the farmer class towards the end. Thus it has been the first ever known popular rising, an agrarian revolution, as it were, against an alien political system and its influences. The earlier Pallava rulers were affected by this rising and the first powerful monarch, King Mahendra Varman (590-630 A.D.) bore the brunt of its impact and fortunately accepted the movement's ideology, shedding many of his earlier notions of ruling, religion and worldview. And ever since Tamil polity and culture received greater attention. Thus the Bhakti Movement in Tamilnadu brought about a political change setting in order the disturbed political chaos and the distorted vision of life and its ideals. This is considered to be the first **Renaissance** of the spirit of the Tamils, their language and culture.

Thus the Movement could achieve not through force, an army in the form of battles and wars, but by the peasants of Tamilnadu guided by spiritual leaders and poets, men and women of finer sensibilities belonging to all the strata of society. And their mode of operation was not one of confrontation with those in power, but one of persuasion through instructions, discourses and common worship in the temples of villages all over the country and finally one of consolidation of the reawakened spirit of the Tamils which ultimately overthrew the Jains and the kings who supported them. As such, this is the first ever known social rising in the annals of history which brought about a change in the society of far-reaching consequences, without, however, resorting to weapons and wars. The aims, functions and ideals of this great Social Movement, generally called the Bhakti Movement are enshrined in the form of devotional poems collectively called the **Bhakti literature** in Tamil.

Social Significance of Bhakti Literature

Though it is a fact that literary productions in general are social in origin, Bhakti literature is unique in that the bulk of its body originates the society i.e. it reshapes the contemporary society's ideology and continues to shed its influence for more than three or four centuries afterwards. It is **therefore a product of the age and the harbinger of the age as well.**

The social fabric of the Sangam Age had accepted some kind of social hierarchy but the notion of "upper" and "lower" class or caste is not to be found there. Especially the odious notion of untouchability never existed there. The women of the Sangam period enjoyed good recognition both in domestic and social afffairs. The worldview was always humanistic and never life - negation. The Akam poetry of the age testifies to all these aspects of the social life of the Sangam Tamils. The centuries which followed i.e. the 3rd, 4th and 5th, generally styled by the historians as the period of Khalabra interregnum seemed to have sought to demolish the Sangam social fabriç and impose on it an ideology which was alien and unhealthy to the Tamil environment. Life negation was projected upon as the ideal; women were considered as unworthy and unnecessary appendix to men with dangerous consequences and the notion of Chandalas or untouchables alongwith rigid caste system came to be implanted. Poetry,

music, drama and other arts were looked down upon as something nefarious and hence undesirable social activities.

It is against such misguided and misanthropic attitude that the Bhakti Movement steered itself and successfully ousted the antisocial perspectives of human life. With a view to achieving this end, the Movement united the entire people of Tamilnadu under one banner. Though it looks like a rising against the Jains and the Buddhists, essentially it was spear-headed towards achieving a social amelioration, besides bringing about the inevitable change in the rulers as well. Such a socio-political movement was so constituted that it cut across almost all the man-made barriers of class, caste and creeds. Its leaders included kings, chieftains, ministers, military-generals, farmers, merchants and professionals of all hues such as priests, shepherds, hunters, oilmongers, butchers, washermen, potters, weavers and so on. Castewise the Movement was represented by Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Merchant class and Farmers, besides the so-called scheduled castes and tribes such as parayas, chandalas and the hill tribe of hunters.

The following chart details the caste and professional affiliation of the 63 Saivite Nayanmars and the 12 Vaishnavite Alwars and thus testifies to the composite nature of the social fabric that constituted the Bhakti Movement.

Nayanmars and Alwars - Group - wise

	Nayanmars	Alwars
Brahmins	16	4
Kshatriyas	12	2
Vaishyas	5	-
Farmers	14	1
Shepherds	2	-
Fisherman	1	-
Oilmonger	1	-
Hunter	1	-

Washerman	1	-
Potter	1	-
Weaver	1	-
Untouchables	2	1
Caste not known	6	4
Total	63	12

Apart from these Alwars and Nayanmars, the subsequent generation of the Bhakti cult which came to be known as Acharyas, also kept up the ideals of the Movement in terms of treating Bhaktas as equals. The episodes of Adi Sankara and Sri Ramanuja as apostles of anti-caste Prapathi are too well known to be described here. All the Bhaktas were considered as one class and the uppercaste Bhaktas are shown to have either accepted the lower caste Bhaktas as equals as in the case of Nandanar, Nilakanta Yalpanar, Kannapa Nayanar or accepted them as their leaders as in the case of Appar or Thirunavukkarasu in Saivism and Nammalwar in Vaishnavism. Examples are plenty to show that God refuses to accept the worship and offerings of the upper caste Bhaktas unless and until they embrace and recognise the lower caste bhaktas, as in the case of Kannapar of Kalahasti, Naminandi Adigal and so on. Adi Sankara's Manisha Panchakam is a testimonial to his utter disregard for caste-distinctions among the Bhaktas. His acceptance and apotheosis of a chandala in Varanasi, as his Guru is a signal example in this regard. Similarly Sri Ramanuja refused to live with his wife who refused to receive and respect his Guru who belonged to a scheduled caste. His throwing open the gates of a temple at Melkote in Karnataka for Harijana - a practice which continues even today - is an exemplary act of communal harmony and this disregard for caste distinctions is a cardinal principle of Visistadhvaida philosophy, especially of the Tenkalai Sampradaya. Thus the Bhakti Movement whether it is Saivite or Vaishnavite following, considered the entire people of India as one community and hence it enjoyed total support of the masses and national integration stood to gain much of its momentum from this basic edifice of the Tamil Movement to begin with .

Treatment of Women

The tenets of Jainism and Buddhism considered women as not of worthy of salvation in the life to come and conjugal life in domestic sphere retards one's salvation. Because of such unnatural principles women were looked down. The Bhakti Movement opposed this view and hence it included women as Bhaktas. The best examples are Karaikkal Ammaiyar and Mangayarkarasiyar in Saivism and Andal in Vaishnavism. More deliberate was the attempt in Vaishnava cult to raise Andal to the status of a lady saint wedded to Lord Krishna himself through the mode of Madhura Bhakti. Then it also glorified domestic life according equal status to women. It is with a view to emphasising this that the Alwars and Nayanmars have shown their gods themselves entering into grihasta life and their consorts becoming goddesses. Thus the Bhakti Movement fought for the amelioration of women and placed them on equal scales in the social hierarchy, setting aside a serious social disharmony generated by the previous ideology.

The Salient Features of Bhakti

Bhakti literature in Tamil culminated in identifying the essence of the emotion of Bhakti as twofold, namely absolute surrender to Him and to His devotees. Devotional poems in general seek something from Him, if not mundane, liberation at least. This end in view could be overt or covert. But the hymns of Alwars and Nayanmars are in the form of passionate prayer for conquering one's senses and for complete surrender to God. They realised that even their desire for surrender should be blessed by Him. These hymns do not seek any recompense for their love of God, not even liberation. This is the general tone of Tamil Bhakti poetry - a selfless devotion to God through effortless surrender to Him.

Towards the final phase of Bhakti Movement we see that Nayanmars and Alwars take the same attitude towards the devotees also. That is to say, they treat devotees as embodiment of God himself and therefore their reverence and devotion to the devotees are no less holy and to them, devotees are none other than the various forms of God. It is not just a concept of spiritual brotherhood as found elsewhere; it is the act of one's devotion to God. The various episodes treated in the hagiology of either the Alwars or Nayanmars do attest to this essential nature of Bhakti

poetry in Tamil. This theme of selfless and absolute surrender to God finds an excellent response and inimitable eloquence in the soul-stirring hymns of Nammalvar, epitomized in his Tiruvaymozhi, which is variously acclaimed as **Dravidopanishad, Dravida Veda Sagaram** and **Dravida Brahma Gita.**

Spread of Bhakti Movements

This outline history of the Bhakti literature in Tamil gives us a glimpse of the socio-political upsurge that took the form of a literary movement resulting in a rich harvest of devotional hymns of exceptional grandeur both in terms of poetic and spiritual experiience afforded by them. The appeal of this Bhakti Movement to the contemporary society was such that it spreads its message beyond the borders of Tamilnadu so as to reach the regions of Karnataka, Maharashtra and even the upper Gujarat on the one hand and the Andhra, Orissa, Bengal and Northern parts of the Gangetic plains and ultimately Rajasthan on the other. While the North-Eastern Odyssey of the Bhakti Movement could be understood through the devotional poetries of these regions from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries ending with the excellent songs of Mira Bai in Rajasthan, its north-western movement could be charted by the spurt of devotional outpourings in the languages of Kannada, Marathi and Gujarati during more or less the same period. Thus the concept of Bhakti poetry has been the contribution of the Tamils to the pan-Indian culture, a socio-literary fact recognised long ago.

There are some earlier texts which speak of the origin and spread of Bhakti at the Pan-Indian level. Brahmanda Purana and Bhavishyat Purana speak of Bhakti as born as a young girl in the Dravida desa on the banks of Tambrapami and Kaveri and travelling all over South India reaches Gujarat where she becomes old.

Padmapurana sings:

I, the beautiful girl of Bhakti was

born in the land of Dravidas;

grew in Karnataka, and a little

more in Maharashtra and finally

became old in Gujarat.

(Uttarakanda - 1.47)

Srimad Bhagavatam (Chapter one) says:

Looking at a lady and two young boys beside her, Narada asks her, "Who are you? Who are these boys? What is the reason for your anguish?" "The lady answers: my name is Bhakti; was born in the land of Dravidas; was raised for some time in Karnataka, in some parts of Maharashtra and became aged in Gujarat losing all my beauty and charm. Then roaming about in some parts of northern land I reached Brindavan where I regained my beauty and bliss. These are my sons, Gnana and Vairagya."

These early accounts give us an idea of the reception or spread of the Bhakti movement from the Southern part of India to other regions.

Summing up

We can say without much reservation that it is during the Bhakti movement in Tamilnadu that the spirit of nationalism emerged, for the first time among the Tamils emphasising that which was Tamil and Tamilian. In terms of national integration as we mean it today, Bhakti literature has been the first instance and a very powerful instrument in fostering a unified concept of Bharat Varsha, not through force, linguistic or political, but through a sublimating experience of Bhakti, cutting across all the borders of language, rituals and other social and regional distinctions. A knowledge of such Movement and at least a historical appreciation of the same with a legitimate pride, will be highly beneficial to our nation of today where to quote W.B. Yeats:

Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world ...

The ceremony of innocence is drowned

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity.

(The Second Coming)

(12) TAMIL VERSIONS OF THE SANSKRIT ITHIHASAS, THE RAMAYANA AND THE MAHABHARATA : AN INFLUENCE STUDY

Literary influences

Literary influence could be classified into two aspects: positive influence and negative influence. Translation, imitation, adaptation and transcreation are considered as forms of positive influence. These influences are found to be occurring both within a culture and across cultures. Parody, satire, caricature, travesty and counter-design are considered as forms of negative influence. They usually occur within a culture.

This paper essays to trace the influence of the Ithihasas on the literary productions of the Tamils from the third century B.C. onwards. This influence has occurred in the form of references through similes, metaphors and allusions in the early literary compositions; in the form of translations, adaptations and transcreations in the later literary works. This is from the point of view of the **giver**.

On the reception side, this paper attempts to discuss the factors such as, while receiving the Ithihasas what was received as such from the giving culture, how was the new materials absorbed and integrated with the main structure and with what degree of success. This is from the point of view of the **receiver**.

There seems to be, however, a different kind of literary phenomenon wherein the text of the less dominant culture or the receiver, after some period of co-living with that of the dominant culture or the giver, starts influencing the giver, makes an impact on the dominant culture and becomes itself the giver. This kind of literary backthrust may be called **reflexive influence** or **counter influence.**

In keeping with the time and space for this paper, the discussion will be confined to Cankam classics and Tamil epics such as Cilappatikaram, Manimekalai, Bharata Venpa and Kamba Ramayanam.

Some instances of counter influence

Valmiki Ramayana and Vyasar's Mahabharata are lucky enough to have acquired critical editions in India. These editions have analysed their texts into two main readings viz. the Northern Recension and the Southern Recension, meaning text that were prevalent in the Northern and Southern parts of India respectively.

Comparative readings of these two recensions of both the Ramayana and Mahabharata have revealed several instances of counter influence. Regarding the Ramayana, the curse of Ahalya is described in the Northern recension as,

Vāyubhakshā nirāhārā tapyanti bhasmasāyani (VR 1,47:29)

Meaning,

"lie down on the bed of ashes in affliction

without food, subsisting on air".

Some of the Southern recension texts record the curse as follows:

Vāyubhakshā silābhūtwā tapyanti bhasmasāyini (VR 1, 48:33)

Meaning,

"be thou turned into a stone and lie down in affliction on the bed

of ashes subsisting on air".

That is, the second foot of the NR, nirāhārā is replaced by the term silābhūtwa in the SR. While the NR of Valmiki Ramayana says, Ahalya was cursed to remain without food, the SR text says she was cursed to be turned into a stone. The editorial note of the Baroda Critical edition says that the reading of silābhūtwā is found in the SR texts G I, G2, G3, and M 1 and M2. It means to say that only such of the versions of the VR that were being used in Tamil nadu including the present Kerala have the term nirāhārā replaced by the term silābhūtwa The G3 (granta script) and M 1 (Malayalam script) belong to the 15th century A.D. and are the oldest Southern recension texts available now.

The SR texts of the Ramayana referred to above have been influenced by two Tamil texts: one a Cankam classic a Paripatal poem and the other

the Ramayana by Kamban of the 10th c.A.D. The Paripatal poem by Nappaṉṉaṉār describes the curse as follows:

This is Indra, the cat

She is Ahalya

He is Gautama who cursed her

Thus to become a stone (Paripatal, 19:50-52)[1]

This poem gives us the clue asto what might have been Kamban's source when he portrays Gautama cursing Ahalya as,

Kalliyal ati (KR 1. 9:22) meaning,

"be thou turned into a stone"

In the absence of such a description of the curse in any of the versions of VR whether in the NR texts or in the SR texts of the East and Deccan, we have no other option but to conclude that the SR texts of VR that were being reproduced in the medieval Tamilnadu came to be influenced by the Cankam poems and the Ramayana by Kamban. This is a case where the giver becomes the receiver, a process which may be called "counter influence".

There is another instance of such influence with a difference. The NR texts of VR do not record the position of the signs of Zodiacs at the time of the birth of Rama and others. They are found only in Southern recensions and they are southern insertions.[2] According to the SR of VR (Gita Press Gorakhpur).

On the ninth lunar day of the bright fortnight of chaita, when the asterism Punarvasu was in the ascendant and five planets happened to be exalted and Jupitar in conjunction with the moon appeared in the Zodiacal sign of Karka, Kausalya gave birth to a highly blessed son named Sri Rama. Bharata was born when the constellation Pushya was in the ascendant and the sun had entered the Zodiacal sign of pisces: While the twins of Sumitra were born when the constellation Aslesha was in the ascendant and the sun had reached the meridian, touching the zodiacal sign of Karka (VR.Bala.XVIII, 8-15).

These details of Zodiac signs at the birth of Rama and others are first noticed in the Southern Recension of Valmiki Ramayana as per the G3 text and these Grantha scripts were based upon the Tamil Kamba Ramayana, the first non-Sanskrit version of VR that appeared towards the end of tenth century A.D.[3]

Thus it becomes evident that we are celebrating "Rama Navami" thanks to Kamban's contribution. But it is still uncertain where did Kamban draw these details from.

This is another example of counter influence on the Valmiki Ramayana, the giver, by Kambaramayanam the receiver.

The Mahabharata by Vyasa

Like VR, the Mahabharata also has several instances of counter influence. There are several references to the story of the Mahabharata in Cankam literature in the form of similes, metaphors and allusions. The early Tamil epics Cilappatikaram and Manimekalai and the Tamil versions of the Mahabharata such as Peruntevanar's Bharata Venpa and Villi Bharatam have several evidences of counter influence. The following references from Bharata Venpa will suffice to establish the same:

I. Durvasa gives five mantras to Kunti (poem 220,Prose) though according to Vyasa Durvasa gave her only one mantra.

2. It is Krishna who tells Karna about the circumstances of his birth. (220)

3. The Cera King Utiyan Ceralatan provided lavish food for both the parties in the Mahabharata war (Puram,2: 13-16) and thence came to be celebrated as Peruncorru Utiyan Ceralatan .

4. Attempt by Duhshasana to disrobe Draupati in the Council hall and on her appeal, Lord Krishna's rescue of Draupati therefrom. (Bharata Venpa & Villi Bharatam)

5. In Vyasa, Vidura is known as a minister of high ethical caliber and is not presented anywhere in Vyasa as a warrior and a bow man. Peruntevanar introduces a change in this character who is said to have broken his bow as a protest against Duryodhana's irreverent behaviour towards him(1 06).

6. Krishna commissions Indra to rob karna of his kavaca and kundala(276,283); in Vyasa Indra goes to Karna on his own accord.

7. Karna used to play the game of dice with Duryodhana's queen Laksanai (Bhanumati). "one day Karna was playing the game of dice with the queen. She lost the game. When she was about to go without paying the stake, Karna caught hold of her sari. The bracelet (mekhala) of the queen gave way and the precious diamonds in large numbers fell helter skelter. Just as this happened, king Duryodhana entered the chamber. Karna was stunned. Duryodhana said smiling "shall I pick up the diamonds?" Should Karna desert such a friend? "No, he would happily die in the service of such a great king" as Karna said to his mother Kunti (315-320).

8. In Perundevanar , there is a vivid description of pre war human sacrificed; Aravan son of Ulupi, Arjuna's wife, is sacrificed in the battle field. This entire episode drawn from folklore and designed to celebrate the eminence of Krishna (Vasudeva) is an innovation of Perundevanar .

9. Perundevanar calls Duryodhana as "aravuyartton" meaning "serpent" bannered.

Vyasa's work clearly tell us that Duryodhana had an elephant as the emblem on his banner(Drona parva 125- 126). Perundevanar is the first South Indian author to call Duryodhana as "serpent bannered". May be a popular South Indian tradition of Legends suggested this change. May be the emblem suits the character of Duryodhana, very well. The fact that almost all the Mahabharata poets of the South, (Tamil, Telugu and Kannada and some Sanskrit works like Bharata Campu) refer to Duryodhana as serpent bannered speaks volumes about the force of the tradition of the receiver.

The cultural and aesthetic force of these alterations and innovations was so inviting and strong that they affected the giver and as a result they have been incorporated into the Southern recension of the Mahabharata. This kind of literary reception guides us to a different kind of literary phenomenon wherein the text of the less dominant culture or

the receiver, after a period of living together with that of the dominant culture or giver, starts influencing the giver, makes an impact on the dominant and becomes itself the giver. That is to say,

Text A → Text B → Text A1

Text A which influences text B is in turn, after some time, influenced by text B and bears the impact and becomes A1.

This kind of literary backthrust may be called **reflexive influence or counter influence** for want of a better expression.

Conclusion

The above discussion reveals to us that there are more number of instances of counter influence in the SR texts of Mahabharata rather than in the SR texts of Ramayana. The reason seems to be the fact that the Southern especially the Tamil influence on the reception of the Mahabharata is greater than the other.

The reason being that the South especially the Tamil tradition was more interested in enhancing the importance of Krishna in the action of the epic. As a result Southern recension has interpolated,

1612 lines describing the divinity of Krishna and His Avatars, etc.

3447 lines describing Vaiṣhnavadharma. and

5700 lines on Ashvamedha Parvan - glorifying Krishna.[4] Consequently the number of slokas of the Mahabharata text varies as follows:

Ur text by Vyasa - 24,000

Critical edition - 73,863

Northern recension - 83,826

Southern recension - 98,545

It means to say that,

North has added about 10,000 slokas to the Text.

South has added about 25,000 Slokas to the Text.[5]

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(13) SUBRAMANIA BHARATI'S THEORY OF POETRY

A particular model or paradigm of theories continues to be operative for a period of time, short or long, until it becomes impossible for it to accomodate any longer the newer perspectives or exceptions to the model and in such a situation it gives place to a new model appropriate to the ethos of the contpmporary climate. The pace of a civilization is directly proportional to the rapid sucessions of such models or paradigms. Contributors to or custodians of established traditions or models do not normally help accelerate the pace of a civilization. It is those who rebel against the traditional paradigms and change their course in tune with the contemporary social milieu that help further the cause of a civilzation. This axiom holds good in regard to any branch of human knowledge.

This is so because the socio-political and cultural ideology which caused the genesis of the earlier theories is no more current as it has been succeeded by an ideology either entirely new or partially modified. Such a change or modification is quite in keeping with Drawin's theory of survival of the fittest and Thomas Kunn's concept of paradigm shift. In other words, such changes and modifications are directed by the existential necessities of chronotopes of all sorts.

Literary theories are not propositional or proclamatory in nature, they are participatory and reflective of the socio-political system and cultural ethos of the community concerned. In cases where they are observed as proclaimed or proposed such proclamations are not corroboroative or conforming, more often they are corrective and conditioning. Great theorists, therefore do not contribute to the existing norms or paradigms rather they contradict, disturb, revolt against it and set a new trend.

A literary text has three essential aspects: the author, the text and the reader; in commercial parlance the producer, the product and the consumer; all these three have relative importance according to the operative ideology of the community in question. At the stage of composition the author and the reader are organically involved .Once the

text is produced, only the text and the reader remain objects of consideration, the author receding to the background. The reader directly meets the text, negotiates with it to get at its significance to him and is essentially responsible for keeping it current.

The text on the other hand is not inert but enshrines in itself the artistic personalities of both the author and the reader-- the author as the agent of envisioning the human life represented and as the encoder of the vision in his characteristic linguistic form, the reader as the object of the vision on the one hand and the decoder of the linguistic form on the other to find his own reflection, and its significance to him at the time of reception. The author's merit or originality consists thus in his vision and in his art. In great poets both these perfectly coalesce. In lesser hands, one or the other either the vision or the art-emerges as the distinctive mark of the author. Repute and longivity are ensured to both these kinds of authors c in proportion to their excellence in one or both the aspects.

Regarding the reader, his entry into the text marks the exit of the author, that is to say, the reader is born on the death of the author-they are mutually exclusive[3]. In other words, the author of the text is frozen as the form of vision and langugage pattern, both of which are formed in relation to the reader who is not a person, not an individual but a community having multidimensional existence, such as spacial, temporal and psychologial. In accordance with the change wrought in space, time and in the psychology of the community, the significance of the text changes.

Poet's vision is his world view - his subject matter-his reader. That is, the subject matter is his audience, the reader, and therefore the patron of his art-who is again not an individual, but a community. The subject matter apart, the artistic form, the poetic pattern is also conditioned by the reader, the receiver of the poem and is structured thus to meet his idiom. What is arrived at is the fact that it is the audience, the reader, the patron who directs the selection of the matter and manner of a work of art, eventhough the genius of the selection is left to the author who is an exceptional individual endowed with extraordinary artistic abilities, to have the vision of a change in the quality of the audience. Such exceptional artists are not an everyday feature. It is usually given to only a few in a given culture eventhough its underlying ideology may have been shared by many.

Though Tamil poetics has a hoary past of about two thousand five hundred years, the poetic model generated during the period of sangam literature has not changed much. The paradigm had of course one or two partial shifts, one during the period of the pallavas and the other during the period of the latter medieval age(15th,16th &17th C.A.D). It was only during the latter part of the 19th century that an essential change in the traditional model was observed to be in the offing and it was given to poet Bharati during the early years of the 20th century to give a definitive turn to the old paradigm and set a new trend in motion.

When poet-Subramania Bharati came on the literary scene, the traditional model or paradigm of Tamil literary theories was almost out of tune with the socio-political situation of his days. When he wanted to write poetry with an urge of communicating with his fellow countrymen, he felt that the exisiting model failed him miserably and hence he introduced a shift of paradigm in almost all aspects of literary creation.

BHARATI'S INNOVATIONS IN POETICAL THEORIES

Theoreticians are not in general practitioners. This is true in the sphere of literature, too. Though it is true that literature precedes theory and the two seem to be different aspects of literature, history of poetics in general is replete with instances where both these aspects have been felt working together. Great poets have at times given expression to their ideas of poetry, theme and pattern of poetic technique embedded in the course of their compositions. Homer, Valmiki, Virgil, Tiruvalluvur, Kalidas and Kamban are some significant examples of this sort. Some poets, though few in number, have been great theoreticians too, like, Horace, Milton, Dr. Johnson, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Goethe, Mathew Arnold and T.S. Eliot.

Poet Subramania Bharati belongs to the latter catagory of innovative practitioners of poetry. Though he has left with us no formal treatise on his concepts of literature, he has, categorically made known his views on poetry, poet, his audience, subject matter and style of literature proper either embedded In his compositions or in the form of prefatory notes to his poems or In the form of short arguments in prose. Though look slender in comparsion to the western poet-critics referred to above, his 'statements

about his theory of poetry are no less formal and influential. In this he stands alone and rather first in the annals of Tamil poets of any significance.

As stated earlier, there have been attempts at innovation, for example, in terms of theme and style by the Alvars and later during the latter medieval period by the authors of "thuthu" 'Kuravanchi' and 'pallu genres' and by the authors of folk ballads. But we have no record of their formal statements about such theoretical questions. Perhaps the social and literary climate was not congenial until the latter part of the 19th century to perceive such a need and feel an impulse towards theorization .. Extended horizon of one's historical and intellctual perspectives so as to have an internationally perceptible view of literature and its relation to society was available only to those who were inclined to have an open rhind and wider window on the world. Poet Subramania Bharati was fortunate enough to have had this vision of extended horizon and hence his energetic exuberance in pronouncing his statements on theories of poetry.

Bharati expresses his views on who is a poet, and what is his aim in being a poet:

A) Poet is a person whose life is poetry and who transforms human experience (life) into poetry. (Bharathiar Katturaikal, P.202)

B) Our vocation is poetry and our duty to serve the nation. (Vinayakar Nanmani malai,25)

C) There is no vocation sweeter (more enjoyable) than that of poetry (VacanaKavithai, Bharathiar Kavithaikal,P. 544)

D) I would like to serve the nation (safeguard the interests of the people)through the virtue of my poetry. (ibid,P. 73).

Poet

It follows from the above statemnts, that in the opinion of Bharati poets form a class by themselves chosen of their own volition and they have a mission to perform.In other words they choose this delightful vocation in order to serve the nation more effectively. This theory of poetry as missionary-rather than mercenary in view is not very new in the history of Tamil poetry, but no one before Bharati had said or had an occassion to

say so. And certainly none before him has said that his entire life was devoted to poetry and that poetry to him was only a means of enlightening the people in the mass.

Aims of Poetry

Whereas Bharati follows his tradition when he says that the end of poetry is to delight and instruct the reader, he blazes a trail when he says:

Even when I write stories, my compositions are born only out of fancy and imagination and are intended to afford pleasures of imagination and never intended to teach any moral or lesson for the reader--- my chief aim will be imaginary portrayal. However moral lessons do creep in in most of the stories without my intention.

(Bharathiar Katturaikal, P. 143)

This is quite new to the Tamil poetic sensibility. Bharati does not elaborate this statement but affirms that such was his practice and serveral of his stories and the beautiful lyric 'Kuyil pattu' bear witness to his contention. Critics have sought to corroborate this with the remark, he is not conscious of an audience listening to him; nor is he conscious of a purpose or message. He sings for he must sing.[4] But we are aware how many variety of messages are drawn from this poem which teases readers out of thought.

Theorists have identified two primary modes to apprehend reality, namely the Classical and the Romantic. In spite of their on going arguments whether these modes are historical or universal, plenty of data are available to show that the romantic mode has votaries far more than the classical, particularly so with increased number of emergent literatures surfacing all around our planet. Poet Bharati, it is a commonplace now, is a romantic in spirit. His kinship with the English Romantics has been established by several scholars.[5]

To have a palpable design upon the reader is something odious to the Romantics. Let us hear Wordsworth:

(a) Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings ....

(b) Each of (my poems) has a worthy purpose. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings will be found to carry along with them a purpose.[6]

It seems that it is the latter Bharati during the years 1910-1920 that was attracted towards Wordsworthian and Keatsian type of romanticism in addition to the chastening influence by Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and Rabindranath Tagore. This could be borne out by the fact that his great poems 'Kannan pattu' Kuyil pattu' belong to this period of his life. Bharati's concept of aims of poetry seems to have thus a dual aspect; we may not be far from truth if we conclude that his early works breathe revolutionary spirit of social commitment while his later poems reveal a swing towards mystic romanticism.

INSPIRATION

There have been continuous debate ever since Plato regarding the role of Nature and Nurture in the function of Genius. Arguments such as 'the poet is born' and 'the poet is made' persist even today. Notions such as superhuman assistance and tapping of the unconscious are advanced in favour of Nature and the contention that the poet is the product of the society reigns supreme in favour of the Nurture theory. Psychoanalysts like Freud, Young and Lacan have demonstrated the respective roles of both Nature and Nurture in the process of artistic compositions. This is the position today.

Both the Classicists and the Romantics have subscribed to the essential role of inspiration in the function of a poet's mind. For the Romantics, inspiration is not just a mode of apprehension, but a living faith, a cult, the be all and end all of their poetic personality. As a romantic poet, Bharati also has expressed his faith in the essentiality of inspiration;

Poetry should emerge on its own

(Bharathi Puthaiyal)

Man is just like a finger God guides it.

I have faith in this. (Ibid, II P.66)

Poetry is composed through Parasakthi...........

Goddess Saraswathi would inspire me to produce

sweet poetry. (Vinayakar Nanmani malai)

Besides these statements, expressive as they are, Bharati's invocations to Muses, such as the universal spirit, goddess Saraswathi, Parasakthi and so on,[7] confirm the view that poet Bharathi was a poet of inspiration. In fact, he believed that he was a blessed poet as he sings:

Having tuned aright a stringed lite

shall we cast it on a rubbish heap?

Hearken, mother might: you've (blessed) - my life

And lit the lamp of reason.[8]

Bharati follows the Tamil tradition when he demonstrates his faith in divine inspiration as the invocatory poems and passages of our Tamil poets through the ages attest.

Apart from being an adherent to his tradition, Bharati also adds some other agents of inspiration. He sings:

The dawn is delightful. ..

She inspires me with poesy.

("Vachana Kavithai",ibid,P.510)

Love inspires poetry in human beings.

("Sva carithai", ibid, P.253)

Love culivates poetry

(Bharathiar Kavithaikal, P. 484)

By including objects of Nature such as he dawn and the evening and human relationship as love as cause of poet's inspiration, Poet Bharati sounds quite new and unheard of in the history of Tamil poetics blazing the trail for poets like Bharathidasan and others after him.

Bharati's Audience

During the days of heroic age, poets wrote for the kings and chieftains who were their patrons. This trend continued well up to the medieval period and later their audience dwindled to feudal lords and still later to Zamindars and Mirasdars. All along, the character of Tamil poetry has been courtly or coterie. Even when the subject matter changed to God and his devotees, the audience remained the court presided over by royal personages with a gathering of poet-colleagues. With the advent of European rule, with the emergence of prose literature and with the spread of general education among the public, writers started writing to an audience of common men through the media of journals and magazines. But this trend was operative only in the realm of prose fiction like novels and short stories. In the realm of poetry feudal lords and wealthy philanthropists, still continued to be the patrons.

Though started his poetic carrier in the court of Ettayapuram Zamindar, Bharati was the first to recognize the common man as his real audience for whose upliftment and resurgence he wrote his poems. The court poetry changed in his hands to mass poetry. In his introductory note to his poem Panchali Sapatham he decleares:

> My writings should be easily intelligible to all the Tamilians who have had an elementary acquaintance with books in Tamil just for a year or two.

"He felt for the first time that literature should be under the patronage of the people and not the kings and chieftains.[9] This momentous decision to broadbase his audience was of far reaching significance in that it determined the subject matter of his poetry and the poetic style to be adopted by him. Democratisation of the readership inevitably led to the democratisation of the subject and style of his poetry which ushered in an era of Bharati in the history of Tamil poetry.

Roughly about a hundred years a go William Wordsworth (1770-1850) the great English Romantic wrote:

> What is a poet? to whom does he address himself. He is a man speaking to men ... poets do not write for poets alone, but for men.[10]

In the history of English poetics, Wordsworth was the first to make such bold and categorical statement as a theory about democratising the poet's audience.

Subject matter of poetry

As adumbrated above, the reader or the audience of any art being at once the patron thereof, transition from fixing of one's audience to that of one's subject matter is just consequential. Having chosen to have the common man as his audience, Bharati naturally chose to sing of the common man, of his merriment and misery, of his abject slavery and poverty, his ignorance and indolence, his fear and fortitude and so on. Even a cursory glance at the table of contents of his poem would suffice to reveal the revolutionary change in this regard. No more kings, no more heroes of superhuman valour, no more feudal lords and no more wealthy patrons to be sung or celebrated. It is a very great and bold step indeed. The classicist norms of grand personage or gods are bidden adieu. Bharati does sing of gods and goddesses but not for their own sake but for the welfare of the nation, for the welfare of his countrymen and for the welfare of the entire humanity on our globe. He is not only a singer of the common people but also the astute champion of their cause. This conception of a poet as an artist, as a reformer, as a rebel, as a deliverer and an apostle is something far more advanced than this age could conceive of or digest. A host of poets who followed Bharati have at now proved through their adherence to his themes and forms the ingenious sweep of his vision of poetry and its relevance to the society.

It is interesting and instructive to note that in the western literary world, it was William Wordsworth who came forward with a bold theory of the common man as the subject matter of serious poetry. His is the first formal treatise on the romantic theory of poetry and it is considered to be the testament of English Romanticism. Let us hear him

A) Poetry is the image of man and nature (ibid,P.173)

B) (The poet) is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs ... the 'poet binds together .. the vast empire of human society

as it is spread over the whole earth and over all time (P175)

C) He is a man speaking to men (P. 171)

D) The principal object .. was to choose incidents and situations from common life .. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen; because in that condition the essential passions of heart find a better soil. (P164)

These statements of poetic theory are voices of protest against the 18th century classical theory of poetry which dealt with royal personages and courtly life portrayed in a grand style of highly ornate language resulting in a stale and sterile poem quite irrelevant to the sensibility of an 18th century English audience. Bharati's situation in India was more or less analogous to that of Wordsworth and hence his rejection of the traditional subject matter in Tamil poetry in favour of the common man.[11]

In addition to democratising the human personage, Bharati's innovation consists in his treatment of nature as subject matter of his poetry. Nature has been portrayed in Tamil secular' poetry as a sympathetic background to the human emotions portrayed or as the manifest forms of the Divine in Bhakti or devotional poetry. But nowhere in the history in Tamil poetry nature has been sung for her own sake until Bharati who made the morning, the evening, the sun, the moon, the sea, wind and rain, as objects of his poetry. This trend of singing of Nature for herself reaches the acme in the hands of his proud disciple Bharatidasan, the other notable followers of this trend being Kavimani Desika Vinayakam Pillai, Parithimar Kalaignar, Mudiyarasan and so on. There are scholars who believe that Bharati's stanzas in his Vacana Kavithai which portray objects of nature are only translations from the Vedic hymns. As to this claim we have no empirical data and even if it is proved, that does not refute the stand because the Vedic hymns were there for long and no body chose before Bharati to translate such hymns on Nature for her own sake. In the West again it was . Wordsworth who advanced a theory of Nature as object of poetry and he is the best poet of Nature in the West admiringly called as prophet of Nature.

Another aspect of his innovation is to sing of oneself, a kind of poetic autobiography. Bharati puts forth his theory about this as follows:

This slender volume of poetry is a novel attempt. It is autobiographical

in content. That is the poet narrates his story in first person. I first publish this small volume to see whether it could receive recognition from the Tamil scholars, since it is a modern form of poetry. And if received favourably by the learned I shall bring out some more works of similar nature.

(Sva Carithai, Bharathiar Kavithaikal, 226)

The fairly long but incomplete poem, "Bharati arupatharu" is written more or less in the same vein. In fact the original title proposed by Bharati was, "Bharati Arayiram" but what is available now is only 66 stanzas. Perhaps the poem was left incomplete (Bharati Puthaiyal, III 234-235)

Even in this innovation, we have a parallel in Wordsworth. Apart from a cluster of poems like those on Lucy, and some stray sonnets, Wordsworth has like Bharati, attempted an autobiographical poem called "the Recluse" planned as a large volume, but it was never accomplished. What materialised in this effort was an introduction to the proposed volume. This introduction. called The Prelude is itself a long poem running up to thirteen books. Its secondary title, "the growth of a poet's mind" reveals the autobiographical nature of the work. It is strange that both the poets, Wordsworth and Bharati should have aimed at a similar venture and ended up with a similar fragment. In view of the dates, the cultural contact and spiritual kinship, is it amiss to infer the influence?

Poetic style and diction

Bharati's protest against his poetic tradition is perceptible more readily in his attempt to revolutionize the style and diction of Tamil poetry. It is more the language of his poems rather than their content that caused a flutter and invited stringent criticism from the traditionalists who saw to it that his poems did not occupy a place in the academic curricula well up to the late fifties of this century. It was on the main the non-academic community which espoused Bharati's cause and succeeded in setting a pedestal for him among the galaxy of the traditional poets. This shows the resistance and resurgence that Bharati's poetic style evoked and the subsequent reception it earned not to speak of the enormity of its following both in poetry and prose.[12]

Bharati's theory of poetic style and diction is but a natural consequence

once he decided to make the common man his audience. Morover he was blissfully aware of the dynamic nature of a language and its contemporary relevance to its speakers. His concept of the organic nature of language, led him to his theory of poetic language. He says:

Language changes with the times;

old words disappear; new words appear. Poets should therefore choose words that are current and intelligible to the contemporary audience. It is a good poem that depicts the best vision of the poet in a simple style.

'(Bharati Katturaikal, P45)

Bharati advocates and employs simple language and simple words not only in his lyrics such as his devotional poems and songs on his country and language, but uses the same style in his epic poem on Panchali's vow also which according to the traditional poetics demands grand style and ornate diction. He enunciates this further as follows:

A poet who can produce in our times an epic in a style comprised of simple words, straight forward syntax, easily understandable with popular tunes-such a poet would be able to infuse new life into our mother tongue. Such a work should lend itself to easy comprehension even for people who have had acquaintance with Tamil literary works just for a year or two ... Goddess Parasakthi herself, who has vowed to see that the Tamil community is blessed with a new life, had induced me to compose such a work; I believe therefore our people would like the style of this epic.

(Introduction to Panchali Sapatham)

Bharati's theory of simple style applies not only to his poetic works, but also to his works in prose. He was emphatic that, all the good characteristics such as clarity, transparency, warmth, and easy flow recommended for poetry by the great poet Kamban should also apply to prose works.

Our Prose these days does not have an easy flow; it is more often cumbersome and rickety.

(Bharathiar Katturaikal, P. 196)

William Wordsworth was the first maior poet in English who propounded

a theory of poetic style, disarmingly simple. In his preface to the Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth speaks at length about his theory of poetic style and diction. He does not accept that there is any essential difference between prose and poetry in terms of style and diction, nor does he allow any essential difference between the language used in poetry and the language really spoken by the people. The essence of his argument runs as follows: he writes about the common man, or about objects of nature in whose close association he lives; he writes for the common man and he himself is a man. The audience and the subject matter being the same, there is no logic or perceptible force of reason to hold that the medium of communication should be different from both of these factors. It (the style) is bound to be 'common', too.

Let us now hear him :

My purpose was to imitate and as far as possible to adopt the very language of men. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it, this has been done for the reason ... to bring my language nearer to the language of men (P.167)

The poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How then can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vivdly and see clearly.

But supposing that this were not the case, the poet then might be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification or that of men like himself. But poets do not write for poets alone, but for men (167)

CONCLUSION

The spirited arguments put forward by Wordsworth and Bharati in favour of the common man as object of Poetry and a simple and transparent style of poetry and fiction alike may not strike us today as something fresh or rebellious, but during the days of these poets in their respective cultures they might have sounded as something strange, uncouth, offending and unacceptable, if not unthinkable. It might have needed firm conviction and steel of nerves on the part of these poets to propose and to

practise such theories of poetry which were iconoclastic in effect. But both Wordsworth and Bharati had had enough of illumination in them as to the soundness of their theory and had therefore stood firm in their stand.

The posterity has in its turn gleefully said 'amen' to these poets of exceptional vision and verve. In the case of Bharati the following was so immediate and immense that he is rightly recognized as the poet of poets.

References

1. Thomas Kunn, **The Structure of scientific Revolutions** (Newyork: Britannica, 1962, 1969)

2. Great critics do not contribute: they interrupt, (they) have attacked established complacency, dismissed the assumptions of their predecessors, and struck out in new directions.

   George Watson, **The Literary Critics.** (London. Penguin Books 1968) P.P 10-11

3. Roland Barthe, "The death of the Author", **Twentieth Century Literary Theory** ed. K.M. Newton (Newyork: St. Maltins Press, 1988), P15 7.

4. K. Meenakshisundaram, **A study on The poetical works of Subramaniya Bharati** (Madras: Paari Nilayam, 1965) P. 110

5.(a) K. Meenakshisundaram, ibid, PP94, 96, 97,108,138,139.

(b) John samuel, **Shelliyum Bharathiyum** (Madras: Mani Pathipakkam, 1978) chapter I

(c) K.G. Seshadri, Sakthi and other poems. (Thanjavur, 1983) preface

(d) K. Chellappan, **Oppiyal Tamil 3.** (Madras: Emerald, 1987) PP Q-3.

6. G. William Wordsworth, "Preface to Lyrical Ballads". **English Critical Texts** ed. Enright and Chickera, (London: OUP, 1966), PP.180, 165.

7. See K Meenakshisundaram, ibid, PPl1-13. 56.

8. Prema Nandakumar (trans) Bharati (New Delhl: Sahitya. Akademi, 197B) P61.

9. M. Srinivasan, Bharati, the pathhfinder (Calcutta-29: Kurinji, 1994) P9.

10. William Wordsmith, ibid, P. 171.

11. There was of course, Boccaccio (1313-1375) before him in Italy, the author of the Decameron, and Chaucer (1343-1400) his follower, the author of the Canterbury Tales who chose non-royal personges as their subject matter. Outside formal literature, these authors might have drawn on the Arabian Nights. But all these attempts before Wordsworth are satirical pieces, scandalous in taste, and moreover these authors have not made any theoretical statements as such.

12. K. Meenakshisundaram, ibid, P. 135.

Tamil Sources

1. **Bharathiar Katturaikal** (Madras: Pumpukar prasuram, 1977)

2. **Bharathiar Kavithaikal** (Kovai: Mercury book co. 1969)

3. Padmanabhan, R.A (ed) **Bharati Puthaiyal** vol. I (1958), II (1959) III (1975) (Madras: Amudha Nilayam).

(14) WORDSWORTH AND BHARATHIDASAN AS POETS OF NATURE

Bharathidasan (1891-1964) has treated Nature elaborately in his poems. His love of Nature and his picturesque description of the objects of Nature are deep and deliberate. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was also a poet of Nature in every sense of the phrase. This similarity of being poets of Nature suggests some validity of comparison between these two great poets.

Nature has been the subject matter of poetry from the very infancy of poesy. There has scarcely been any poet in any language who has not sung of Nature in one or other form. But we do not call them all as poets of Nature. In the history of English literature. for example, almost all poets, great and small. have sung of Nature. but the critical scholarship has labelled only a particular group of poets as poets of Nature, and Wordsworh is one of the greatest of them. This means that there are certain reasons for such nomenclature. It holds good with regard to Bharathidasan also. There have been many poets from the Cankam Age till the dawn of this century who have treated Nature in their poetry. But there is a special reason for calling Bharathidasan as a poet of Nature. It is specifically in this aspect that Wordsworth and Bharathidasan are comparable to each other.

Harmony between Man and Nature/ dichotomy

To Wordsworth, Man and Nature constitute single harmonious bond. He believes that the mind of Man is animated by the same spirit which informs all natural phenomena. The external visible beauty of Nature is only a sensuous manifestation of the all-pervasive divine spirit. By contemplation of and in communion with Nature man can realise this divine spirit. This he describes as follows:

> And I have felt
>
> A presence that disturbs me with joy
>
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting sun

And the round ocean and the living air

And the blue sky, and in the mind of Man

A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts

And rolls through all things.

(Tintern Abbey, 95-104)

Nature to him is therefore, not merely objects of joy, but she is the anchor of his purest thoughts, the nurse, the guide, the guardian of his heart and the soul of all his moral being.

Bharathidasan is also a great lover of Nature. He is very much delighted in the company of Nature. He could sing :

I see all the directions,

the sky, the many many things

That are packed on our earth

the moving and the still things

I see beauty everywhere

and am filled with joy

It is she that endows

interest to all the things

Age cannot wither nor custom

stale her eternal youth

Look with desire and will

find her everywhere

There is no misery when

absorbed in beauty.[1]

We can see here that the poet's reaction to the beauties of Nature is purely sensuous. He does not percieve any innate harmony between himself and an object of Nature. His powers of perception and description are superb, but they are employed to a different purpose. The reason for such a perceptual difference is to be sought in their concepts of Nature and Man, in combination and in isolation as well.

That Bharathidasan does not view the objects of Nature in Wordsworthian sense is understandable from his poem on "Makkal Nilal" (state of humanity), where he sets the images of a bird and a squirrel in contrast to Man and deplores the sordidness of the latter.[2]

Some of the poems in Smile of Beauty also record a similar contrastive attitude of the poet towards Nature. For example he sings:

> Like the lotus fanning out its petals
>
> Sit and eat' the doves in a circle;
>
> No cuts, no thrusts we find in their lives
>
> No compulsion to eat in isolation, no 'the high and low' superstition.[3]

This poem shows the differential nature of the human world from that of the non-human. This confirms his dichotomous view of Nature.

Spiritualisation of Nature

In accordance with his view of Oneness of Man and Nature Wordsworth cherishes the belief that every object of Nature, animate and inanimate is just a different form of manifestation of the wisdom and Spirit' of the Universe. He therefore spiritualises the objects of Nature, For example. he sings To the Cuckoo:

> Shall I call thee bird
>
> Or but a wandering Voice?
>
> .... thou art to me
>
> No bird, but an invisible thing
>
> A Voice, a mystery

Again the incidents of stealing the boat and snatching away the bird which belonged to another boy are unique expressions of Wordsworth's attitude to Nature. Let us lear him about the latter:

> moon and stars
>
> Were shining o'er my head; I was alone
>
> And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
>
> That was among them. Sometimes it befel
>
> In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
>
> O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
>
> Which was the captive of another's toils
>
> Became my prey; and when the deed was done
>
> I heard among the solitary hills
>
> Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
>
> Of undistinguishable motion, steps
>
> Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

(Prelude I,321-332)

Wordsworth does not simply describe the beauty of Nature. As a poet of description of Nature Wordsworth can be easily surpassed by many poets. With special reference to **Alalkin Cirippu** (Smile of Beauty) and to some stanzas in **Puratcikkavi** Bharathidasan is by far the better as a poet of description. The effect of such description on the audience is catching. Nature for Wordsworth on the ther hand is not inanimate, not simply sensuous' but is permeated by a soul or spirit, Nature then is a spiritual entity for him as for Thiru Vi. Ka. Nature's outward beauty only the visible symbol of the indwelling divine spirit.

One may cite in this connection some passages by Bharathidasan where he describes objects of Nature in human terms. The following stanza from Puratcikkavi describing the absorbing beauty of the moon is an example:

Covering up your person in full

With your garments, the blue hued sky

You expose only your glittering face called moon

What wrong will befall you

if you expose your beauty in full

Would this world perish

Ravished by love?[4]

But this is only a case of personification. The song **'Enkenku Kaninum Cakthiyata'** smacks of such spiritualisation but even here the poet does not seem to relish such a belief. The fact remains therefore that while Wordsworth's description is the result of a deep-rooted faith, Bharathidasan's is mere a poetic device than faith. A romantic poet lives by the faith he upholds and not by reason or intellect. We know too well that Bharathidasan could not tolerate such a faith in Nature. There is a similar situation in his song of 'Vanampati' .

.... On the high sky

Keep (you) on pouring your melody and the native Tamils

Keep (for ever) devouring your song as if "Tenpanku".[5]

Even though these lines may suggest certain transcendental tone, the poet does not mean it. The phrase a few lines above 'You wouldn't believe' would ensure this. What he suggests may be an idea of generic singular. The joy he feels from its song is also not of any far reaching transcendental influence as that of a nightingale to John Keats, but a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings stimulated by the sweet song of a Vanampati.

Education of Nature

Both Wordsworth and Bharathidasan speak of lessons to be drawn from the objects of Nature, but with a difference. While such education of Nature is quite individual and mystic to Wordsworth, Bharathidasan applies it to social amelioration of his day. Such a difference may be ascribed to their respective social milieux. *(அழகின் - வானம், 1, 10)*

Description of Nature

As poets of description of Nature, BharathidaBan is by far the better poet. Wordsworth is accurate in his descriptions; he enjoys it and receives peace and strength; but he could not enable the reader to do the same unless he is also of the mystic temper. But on the other hand Bharathidasan's descriptions which are not only accurate, but highly intoxicating and ecstatic are so objective that any reader with a slight flair for imaginative follow-up can share the poet's thrills and joys. The following example may prove this:

> The moment , I look at you O Moon
>
> My heart is flooded with feelings
>
> And I find no words to paint it
>
> However hard I search for .
>
> I behold you with both my eyes;
>
> I am brightened and throw off darkness
>
> I shake of sufferings all and feel elated beyond limit
>
> I am cooled in and out and am free from imitations all
>
> My heart becomes full with love
>
> And it ripens to grow and touch the heavens
>
> I lost myself mingling with your beauty.[6]

Divine Reality Known Through Nature

Mysticism is an essential element of Wordsworth's poetry. Since he believes that there is a pre-existing harmony between the mind of man and Nature, he could in a beatific moment intuitively realise the divine Reality in the objects .of Nature. The ordinary mountain echo is also a hint sent from the world, beyond sense and time:

> Such rebounds our inward ea r
>
> Catches sometimes from afar

Listen, ponder, hold them dear

For of God - of God they are.

Such a belief is derided by Bharathidasan when he sings:

Lord Murugan they saw

Lord Velan they perceived

In these flushy, green and stately hills.

Insane phraseology, empty doctrines.[7]

Wordsworth is able to achieve such a power of realisation when he is in the company of Nature. He believes that in such a company he is relieved of this worldly burdens and finds himself in a blessed mood. For Bharathidasan on the other hand Nature is a treasure chest of inexhaustible joy affecting him pleasurably; a scenic tonic against man-made human ills. There it ends. He does not find any divine Reality there.

References

(1). Translation of the following poem by Dr. P. Parameswaran, Smile of Beauty pp. 10-11

திசை கண்டேன், வான் கண்டேன், உட்புறத்துச்
செறிந்தனவாம் பலப்பலவும் கண்டேன் யாண்டும்
அசைவனவும் நின்றனவும் கண்டேன் மற்றும்
அழகுதனைக் கண்டேன் நல்லின்பங் கண்டேன்
பசையுள்ள பொருளிலெல்லாம் பசையவள் காண்
பழமையினால் சாகாத இளையவள் காண;
நசையோடு நோக்கடா எங்கும் உள்ளாள்
நல்லழகு வசப்பட்டால் துன்ப மில்லை.

(அழகின் சிரிப்பு, அழகு)

(2) அணில் ...... சாதிக், கூச்சல் குழப்பங்கள் கொத்தடிமைத்தனம்
கொஞ்சமும் இல்லை அங்கே

மனிதர் .... கெட்ட, வஞ்சகம்சேர் சின்ன மானிடர் சாதிக்கு
வாய்த்த நிலை இதுவோ.

பா.க. 62-63)

(3) Translation of the following Dr. P. Parameswaran,

Smile of Beauty pp. 71-72

இட்டதோர் தாமரைப்பூ இதழ்விரிந் திருத்தல்போலே
வட்டமாய்ப் புறாக்கள் கூடி இரையுண்ணும்; அவற்றின்
வாழ்வில்
வெட்டில்லை குத்துமில்லை வேறுவேறு இருந்தருந்தும்
கட்டில்லை கீழ்மேல் என்னும் கண்மூடி வழக்கமில்லை.

(அழகின் சிரிப்பு, புறாக்கள்)

(4) Translation of the following by A. Dakshinamurthy,

Poems of Bharathidasan p. 4

நீலவான் ஆடைக்குள் உடல் மறைத்து
நிலாவென்று காட்டுகின்றாய் ஒளிமுகத்தைக்
கோலமுழு தும்காட்டி விட்டால் காதற்
கொள்ளையிலே இவ்வுலகம் சாமோ?

(புரட்சிக்கவி)

(5) Translation of the following by this author.

உயர்வானில்

பாடிக்கொண்டே யிருப்பாய்? பச்சைப் பசுந்தமிழர்
தேடிக் கொண்டே யிருப்பார் தென்பாங்கை உன்பால்

(வானம்பாடி)

(6) Translation of the following by A. Dakshinamurthy, Poems of Bharathidasan, p. 5

உனைக்காணும் போதினிலே என்னுள்ளத்தில்
ஊறிவரும் உணர்ச்சியினை எழுதுதற்கு
நினைத்தாலும் வார்த்தைகிடைத் திடுவதில்லை
உன்னைஎன் திருவிழியாற் காணுகின்றேன்
ஒளிபெறுகின்றேன் இருளை ஒதுக்குகின்றேன்
இன்னலெலாம் தவிர்கின்றேன் களிகொள்கிறேன்
எரிவில்லை, குளிர்கின்றேன் புறமும் உள்ளும்
ஆகாயம் அளாவுமொரு காதல் கொண்டேன்
எனையிழந்தேன் உன்னெழிலில் கலந்ததாலே.

(புரட்சிக் கவி)

(7) முன்பு கண்ட காட்சி தன்னை
முருகன் என்றும் வேலன் என்றும்
கொன்ப யின்றார் சொல்வர் அஃது
குறுகும் கொள்கை அன்றோ தோழி!

(பா.க. 1, காட்சி இன்பம்)

(Translation by this author)

TEACHING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN INDIA (TELI)

A COMPARATIVE POETICS APPROACH

Study of Literature

Study of Literature is "an attempt to convert linguistic sequences into literary structures and meanings." To be able to succeed in this attempt one needs to know a certain set of conventions which make literature possible. Though all arts are based on conventions, it is in literature where conventions play the greatest role. Such conventions which permit the reader to arrive at appropriate meanings of literary structures, forms, styles, symbols, etc., constitute a grammar of literature. These conventions both the author and the native reader are implicitly aware of. Such a **grammar of literature** is called poetics. By poetics we mean a theory of literary discourse, a theory of reading of literature. In short, it comprises a limited set of conventions that govern the composition of literature and condition the meanings and effects of literature. A poetics is not a science of contents but a science of conditions of contents. With a limited set of conventions, it will permit or generate a variety of meanings; it would account for various interpretations but not any interpretation. It is not concerned with an individual text nor with its meaning, but with a proto text and with its "empty meaning". Such a complex fabric of literary conventions, which are translinguistic in nature is called literary competence (Janathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics*, pp. 114-119)

Teaching of Literature

Now turning to practice, a literary pedagogy should aim at developing the implicit literary competence of the learners and sensitize them to the conventions of the literary tradition. It should aim at teaching a theory of reading. In practice, we see literature teaching being busy with explaining the meanings of individual texts and at the most with critical and stylistic analyses of individual texts prescribed for the course. Teaching of literature does include at times supply of background material regarding the genre,

the author and his environs, social and literary. But this is given, not arrived at, even where it is arrived at, it is not by the learner. I am aware, of course, of the pragmatic side of this practice dictated by our system of education which is self - defeating.

I propose, given an ideal condition and a real autonomy to the teaching community that literature teaching should aim at teaching of poetics. Individual literary texts should be used as performance pieces of literary competence; I am not pleading for anything new nor the impossible. What are we doing in ELT? We are not teaching the **parole**; we are using the parole only to teach or develop the **langue**. We use linguistic performances (texts) to teach aspects of linguistic competence and to approximise the ideolect to the standard performance. I am only appealing for the application of or an extension of our ELT practice to that of teaching of literature.

Literature teaching should thus aim at developing the latent abilities in the learners to generalise from the given texts either to its **langue** or to other aspects of the literary tradition or to personal or social significances outside literature. Students / learners must be assisted to develop their abilities towards achieving this end and our theory of and techniques in literature teaching are useful only in so far as they serve these aims.

Teaching of Second Language Literature

Whereas the teaching of English literature on the above lines is a very exacting task in a situation, like ours, the fact that we are teaching English literature, to most of our students as second language literature makes our task more exacting. This is because of the learner's lacking of the implicit understanding of the conventions of the English literary tradition. Moreover as in the case of L2 learning, the implicit understanding of his mother tongue literature interferes with his task of learning the L_2 literary conventions. At the best the learner is able to grasp the contents of L_2 literature and there it stops. He is not able to respond to the text. The gap in the conventions, forms, styles, cultural items, etc., bars him from freely engaging with the text. Not only that in the case of learners who have the literary competence of a rich literature, fully developed or in the stage of

being developed in his L_1 literature class, strange confusions confront him. A good teaching of the aspects of English literary competence may help the learner to a better response. But the interference caused by the teaching of mother tongue literature has to be removed. It is at this stage that I would like to suggest that as Brumfit (1986, 1991:186) asserts "the teaching of literature in a foreign language must still be partially dependent on approaches taken to teaching mother tongue literature".

Since the essence of literature (human situations) and the aims of literature (delight and instruction) are more or less universal, what stands between two literatures are the culture - bound conventions organised in the form of the literary discourse. This barrier could be removed at least to a desired degree by teaching the aspects of the poetics of both L_1 and L_2 literatures in comparison. The similartieis and distinctions between these two in terms of literary genres, styles, themes, cultural conventions, etc., may be brought out. This, I believe, would help remove the confusion caused by the interference. This is what we are doing in the ELT programme. We use contrastive linguistics for an effective remedial teaching. The same may be attempted in literature teaching also.

I am aware, of course that this suggestion means an extra load on the part of the teacher of English literature. But the redeeming feature is the fact that there are several teachers amongst as who are already using such pedagogic strategies in their class rooms with success. Moreover the Tamil literary conventions are readily available in a very neatly condified form, in the third Book of Tolkappiyam, called porulathikaram. It is the poetics of Tamil literature composed around the fifth century B.C. that governs the compositions upto the tenth century A.D. with minor modifications. The later conventions are contained in many a Pattiyal work which were codified in succession from the tenth century A.D. onwards. These works constituting the poetics or Tamil literature will be very helpful to a teacher of English. Hence, I believe comparative poetics will be more useful as a tool of methodology of teaching English literature in India.

Some samples

We shall see some examples to show how comparative poetics will be more helpful in our literature classroom practice. Here is a love poem by Sir Walter Scott:

Where shall the traitor rest,
He the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin and leave her? . . .
Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap
Ere life be parted;
Shame and dishonour sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it
Never, O' never!
Eleu loro
Never O' never!

(Where shall the lover rest)

This poem is about betrayal of love and belongs to the tradition of English Romantic poetry. The learner of L_2 literature, coming from a Tamil language or literature class is baffled with the contents and spirit of the above poem. Because either loss of life or betrayal of love is quite alien to and unheard of in the poetic tradition of Akam poetry (love poetry) in Tamil. The teacher could explain to the learners the difference between the traditions in the treatment of love and make the students respond to such English poems in the context of English Romanticism. Shelley's **Epipsychidion** is a good example of the typical Romantic love which is, 'true love' in the concept and platonic in nature. He does not relish the idea of constancy in love and that too with only one person. Let us hear him:

I never was attached to that great sect
Whose doctrine is that each one should select
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend...
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

(Epipsychidion 11. 149-51, 158-59)

Shelley's concept of 'true love' being Platonic, he thinks that there is no question of diminishing of one's love even when one is in love with more than one person at the same time. He sings:

True love in this differs from gold and clay
That to divide is not to take away.
Love is like understanding, that grows bright
Gazing on many truths; its like thy light
Imagination.

(11. 160-164)

The Akam poetic tradition begins with the physical union of the lovers; it is never spiritual, always physical. A spiritual sublimation of human love finds a place in Tamil literary tradition much later in Bhakti poetry, which is not called love poetry. Secondly, constancy in love is unquestionable in Akam tradition. The lady-in-love tells her lover.

Nay, not only Here and Now;
Even in the births to come,
You are my husband and
I am your sweetheart ever

(Kuruntokai 49/3-5)

Not only the lady; even the lover expresses such sentiments in Tamil:

"In this life we won't part," I told
Her eyes at once were with tears filled
That we may part in the births to come.

(Kural 1315)

Most of the English Romantics poetry end on a melancholy note and there is hardly any love poem which celebrates successful love.

Tamil love poetry, especially the classical poetry of Akam, never ends on a melancholy note. Tamil poetic convention has so concocted the theory of Akam love that **the sun of delight never sets in the Akam empire.**

We shall look at another example. Even non - love poems present a contrastive picture in terms of poetic conventions. There are poems both in English and Tamil which bemoan the loss of some human being dearer to the poets concerned. The emotion of such poems being common, they differ in terms of formal representation. Let us see how Milton represents his sorrow over the death of his friend Edward King in an elegiac form:

We ere nursed upon the selfsame hill

Fed the same flock by fountain, shade and rill;

Together both ere the highlawons appear'd

Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,

We drove afield, and both together heard

What time the gray-fly winds here sultry horn,

Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,

Of till the star that rose at evening bright

Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel...

But, oh, the heavy change, now thou art gone,

Now thou art gone, and never must return

Thee shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves

With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown

And all their echoes mourn

The willows and the hazel copses green

shall now no more be seen

fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays!

(Lycidas, 11. 23-44)

These line of Lycidas, ornate and idyllic as they are after the spirit of the Renaissance, express the difference Milton feels by the sudden disappearance of his friend through his untimely death by drowning and the poet shows the difference in the human sentiment echoed or reflected in the non-human objects of Nature. This is a Universal motif and the learner of any L_1 literature will have no problem in responding to this aspect of the poem. But the treatment of the human emotion has been pastoralized and hence the entire poem including the title has a pastoral cloak-which is not Universal, not even English. Milton adapts the classical form of pastoral mode to an elegiac poem in English.

Now let us see an elegy in Tamil. Pari, a chieftain in ancient Tamilnadu was killed in an invasion by the three great monarchs namely the Chera, Chola and Pandiya and his hilly region was annexed to their lands. The siege continued for a month. The two daughters of the slain chieftain bemoan their father's death and their misfortune in a song as follows:

When the moon shone in full last time

We had our father, the lord of our hills.

Now also the moon shines in full on the hills

But, oh the difference,

We've lost our father and our hills too,

To the greedy triumvirate with their mightly armies.

(Puram. 112)

This short simple poem is too transparent to need any commentary. The sorrow of the daughters so naively expressed through contrast, affects the reader inescapably. The Tamil student who is familiar with

such elegiac poems needs some orientation into the pastoral conventions which governed the composition of Lycidas. Such conventions should not be given simply as points of reference; better they are elicited through discussions which should follow a teaching of the respective conventions in English and Tamil. In case the class is multilingual, the pan-Indian conventions may be introduced.

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